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GAMEFAN

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VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 4
APRIL 1999

First Look!



Sega Rally 2
Rockets Onto Dreamcast!!!



The First Shots of
Gran Turismo 2
The Mega-Hit Sequel!!

Also inside this issue:
T'AI FU
QUAKE 2
MARIO PARTY
POINT BLANK 2
BLOODY ROAR 2
BEETLE ADV. RACING
GOEMON'S GREAT ADV.
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Ed Zone



This month's rant-o-rama contains two things: firstly, some info regarding editorial and design changes that we've implemented starting with this issue of GF, and secondly (every game mag editor's fav topic) some prognostication about the remainder of the year and what it holds for the industry. So without further ado, away we go!

As you flip through the issue you'll probably notice that we've made a number of small, but significant changes to the book. Primarily this takes the shape of how we present Viewpoints and review scores. Doing away with the monstrously deformed info-bar is something we'd been meaning to do for months, but just finally got around to completing (hey, we're busy here!). Now you'll note that it's a lot more "layout friendly" and much less obtrusive than it was previously. A major addition to the neo-info-bar is its own individual Viewpoint score. This way we don't have the same guy writing a minimum 400-word review and then having that same person paraphrase himself in a Viewpoint box.

With the Viewpoint pages themselves we've now trimmed down the number of eds doing Viewpoints. Instead of having a mish-mash of editors each month, we've locked it at 4 (the 4th person being the individual that rates the game in the actual review text). Hopefully the end result is that you can more easily identify with a particular editor on a monthly basis **and** it gives you one more opinion distilled down to Viewpoint level each month.

These mods to the basic look of GF are only the start, and in the coming months you can look forward to some more tweaks and tinkering. This of course would be a great time for you to put pen to paper (or digits to keyboard) and let us know what **you** want to see in the course of our 're-design'. I generally plead for input once every few months, and I'd rather not see the future of GF determined by 5-10 hard-core readers when everybody that takes the time will have an equal voice.

Now it's time for the semi-annual "which company will have the best year" Nostradamus special (although, like last year, this won't be a very hard call). Last year, thanks in no small part to *Zelda*, Nintendo had a smashingly good year. Actually, that probably doesn't quite do it justice — absolutely unbelievable might be a better way of phrasing it. In fact, they did incredibly well not only with US gamers (as is typical) but were wildly successful in the Land of the Rising Sun as well; something they hadn't experienced since the heyday of the Super Famicom (the Japanese SNES for our less astute readers). Not only were they the number one software producer in America but that title carried over to Japan, as well. Now that the dust has cleared for '98, we can take a quick peek at '99 and see what's in store for everybody's favorite game companies.

> **"...Sega will finally become a force to be reckoned with once again."**

As is to be expected, Sony will have a fantastic year. Spear-heading their pre-2000 assault will be the sequel to *Gran Turismo*. Without a doubt this game will sell in unbelievable quantities and prove once again why there are **so** many racing games on PlayStation; apparently people kinda like them (I, for one, could do with a lot fewer). Along with *GT2*, Sony has a bevy of games also waiting to take up some of the slack (though, not having a game the like of *Metal Gear Solid* this year may prove interesting).

Sega will finally re-enter the console arms race with the raw fury of Dreamcast to back them up. Games covering every major category will be available upon release and Sega is just a bit serious about capturing massive market and mindshare. Provided they get the price-point right (no more than $200) and the number of games they've been promising (upwards of 20) Sega will finally become a force to be reckoned with once again.

But when it's all said and done, come this time next year when I'm writing this again, it'll be all about Nintendo. With games as seemingly silly as *Mario Party* and *Smash Bros.* leading the first quarter charge (both brilliant, BTW), and the Rare-powered *Jet Force Gemini* and *Perfect Dark* poised to break records, it's going to be the best year yet for Nintendo (*Zelda* was a mere warm-up next to some of the titles coming later this year). *Donkey Kong Country 64* looks set to even steal some of the graphical thunder from Dreamcast! And lest anyone forget (how could you?) there's *Star Wars Episode One: Pod Racer*, which will be **the** game of the first half of the year. Being in second (hardware units sold) isn't such a bad place to be, now is it?

So now that I've gotten that bit of obligatory fortune-telling, let's take a quick peek at what we have for you this month. Super Teeter takes *Goemon 2* and *Beetle Adventure Racing* for a spin; Capcom's *Street Fighter Alpha 3* arrives in a GF-exclusive first review done by everyone's favorite cardboard cut-out, Eggo; the very first shots of Sony's racing tour-de-force, *Gran Turismo 2*; as well as looks at the latest DC games, *Smash Bros.* on N64 and the first official PS2 info in Other Stuff. Yeah, sounds like a pretty good month to me. **ECM**

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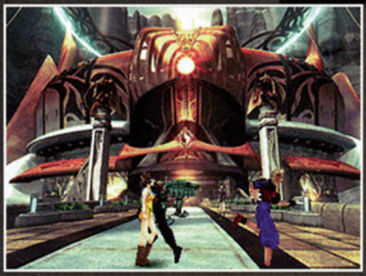
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Top 10 Most Wanted



1 READERS' TOP TEN **ZELDA: OOT N64**

READERS' TOP TEN

1) *Zelda: OOT* - N64
2) *Turok 2: SoE* - N64
3) *Xenogears* - PS
4) *Castlevania* - N64
5) *Rogue Squadron* - N64
6) *Tomb Raider 3*- PS
7) *Metal Gear Solid* - PS
8) *WCW/NWO Revenge* - N64
9) *Mario Party** - N64
10) *GoldenEye* - N64

READERS' MOST WANTED

1) *Smash Brothers* - N64
2) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
3) *SF Alpha 3* - PS
4) *Soul Reaver* - PS
5) *Sonic Adventure* - DC



6) *RE Code Veronica* - DC
7) *Power Stone* - DC
8) *Perfect Dark* - N64
9) *Sega Rally 2* - DC
10) *Resident Evil 64* - N64

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

* IMPORT TITLE



1. *Goemon's Great Adv.* - N64
2. *Power Stone** - DC
3. *T'ai Fu* - PS
4. *Turok 2* - PC
5. *Smash Brothers** - N64
6. *Evolution* - DC
7. *Quake 2* - PC
8. *Valis 3* - TurboGrafx CD
9. *Rampage Univ. Tour* - PS
10. *House of the Dead 2* - Arcade



1. *VOOT(Virtual On 2)* - Arcade
2. *Last Blade 2* - Arcade
3. *Street Fighter Zero 3** - PS
4. *Tales of Phantasia** - PS
5. *Syphon Filter* - PS
6. *Silent Hill* - PS
7. *Smash Brothers** - N64
8. *Bloody Roar 2: BotNA** - PS
9. *Metal Gear Solid* - PS
10. *Starsiege: Tribes* - PC



1. *Street Fighter Alpha 3** - PS
2. *Goemon's Great Adv.* - N64
3. *Beetle Adv. Racing* - N64
4. *StarCraft: Brood War* - PC
5. *Zelda: OOT* - N64
6. *GoldenEye* - N64
7. *Hybrid Heaven* - N64
8. *Sonic Adventure** - DC
9. *King of Fighters 98* - NeoGeo
10. *Quake 2* - PC



1. *Final Fantasy VIII** - PS
2. *Quake 2* - PC
3. *Silent Hill* - PS
4. *Bust-A-Move '99* - N64
5. *Street Fighter Zero 3** - PS
6. *StarCraft: Brood War* - PC
7. *Jade Cocoon* - PS
8. *Sonic Adventure** - DC
9. *Turok 2* - PC
10. *Maniac Mansion* - C64



1. *Power Stone** - DC
2. *Sega Rally 2** - DC
3. *Goemon's Great Adv.* - N64
4. *Bloody Roar 2** - PS
5. *Bust-A-Move '99* - N64
6. *Street Fighter Alpha 3* - PS
7. *Quake 2* - N64
8. *Sonic Adventure** - DC
9. *Daytona 2* - Arcade
10. *Beetle Adv. Racing* - N64



1. *NHL '99* - PS
2. *Bloody Roar 2: BotNA** - PS
3. *Baldur's Gate* - PS
4. *Quake 2* - PC
5. *Sega Rally 2** - DC
6. *Street Sk8ter* - PS
7. *Final Fantasy VIII** - PS
8. *Civ. 2 Gold* - PC
9. *Bust-A-Move '99* - N64
10. *Fallout 2* - PC

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DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:
Steve Groll
PR Media Super Guru
Eidos Interactive/Crystal Dynamics

1. ***Delta Force* - PC**
2. ***Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver* - PS**
   I know, it's ours, but I get to play it just about every day, and I can't wait to play the final rev!
3. ***Ridge Racer Type 4* - PS**
   I want it now!
4. ***Turok 2* - N64**
   Can it look any better? I think not.
5. ***Zelda: OOT* - N64**
   Now, if I could just make time to finish it!
6. ***Rogue Squadron* - N64**
7. ***Half Life* - PC**
8. ***NFL Blitz* - N64**
   You should have seen the Super Bowl party at my house! I think we played more *Blitz* than actually watched the Super Bowl.
9. ***MediEvil* - PS**
   One of my favorites.
10. ***GoldenEye* - N64**
   I still blow off some stress with a sniper shot to the head!




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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality


ECM


EGGO


TEETER


FURY


Street Fighter Alpha 3
GAME OF THE MONTH!



Blast Radius
PlayStation
Psygnosis
3D Shooter

ECM: Wow, *Colony Wars 3*! And it's only been a couple of months since the last one... wait, this is a different game?! Um, while I can understand developers wanting to get the most out of the engines that they've poured time and money into, this I cannot fathom: is the world clamoring for another *Colony Wars* fix already?! This aside, the engine still smokes, the battles are still dramatic, and the story is still terrible. You like *CW*, you'll like this... you don't, well...

G	C	P	M	O	Score
10	8	7	7	1	75

Eggo: The only reason this game gets a 1 instead of a 0 for Originality is because I'm reserving that score in case Psygnosis releases *Blast Radius: Vengeance*. C'mon guys, *Colony Wars* is a great title and all, but this is goin' to the well one too many times. I'm sure fans of *CW* can't get enough of that space-blasting action, but I'm not buying the idea that this is a new game. Rent it only if you're curious. Otherwise, stick to the *Colony Wars* franchise — the real McCoy.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
9	8	8	7	1	79

Teeter: In the video game world, a successful game usually results in copycat titles... from lesser companies. Then there's *Blast Radius*, a virtual carbon-copy of *Colony Wars*. Hmmm, a game I never really cared for, cloned almost perfectly (with a bit more action). Sorry folks, but there's zero reason for you to even consider this if you already have *CW*. Plus, not being a fan of these horrid little 'space sims', I couldn't care less about this one. Pass!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
9	8	4	7	4	55



Guardian's Crusade
PlayStation
Activision
RPG

ECM: All I hear from people all the time is that the US never gets enough RPGs. While I agreed with that sentiment back in the 16-bit days, it doesn't hold as much water nowadays. That being said, this is a solid, if cliché, little RPG by the makers of *Toshinden* (try not to grimace). If you're dying for a new RPG, by all means. If you're like me and a bit more discriminating about your RPG fare then hold off for the goods later on this year (*Lunar*, *Jade Cocoon*, *FF Collection*).

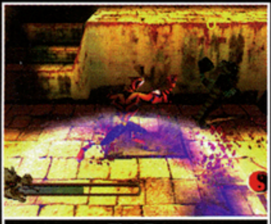
G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	7	7	7	3	77

Teeter: Despite not being all that original, *Guardian's Crusade* isn't that bad of a game. Sure, it ain't all that original, but what it does it does very well. The whole 'raise a baby' concept is pretty original, and I've yet to see this kind of silky smoothness on any other PS RPG. Comparing it to that 'other' PS monster (*FF8*) would be silly, so I won't bother. Again, not very original and very stale at times, but not a bad beginning RPG either. Try it, you might like it!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	9	7	5	85

Fury: It's nice to see a game like *Guardian's Crusade* come out at a time when the only words RPG fanatics can utter are *FF8*. Also the idea behind the "living toys'" attacks is a nice change of pace from the usual array of magic spells. While *GC* might not be among the flashiest looking RPGs available it does have a very nice hand-drawn look to it, that I must say captured my interest right off the bat. The next 7 or so months ain't gonna go by any quicker, so enjoy *GC* for now!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	7	8	7	9	83



T'ai Fu
PlayStation
Activision
Action/Fighting

Eggo: I have a strange love/hate relationship with *T'ai Fu*. When I first saw this game at E3, most of GF was impressed, but not I. However, when I sat down and played the reviewable, my view changed because the story (of all things!) was good — a mix between a kung-fu movie and a comic book. Finally, when I started playing, that illusion of a good game was completely shattered by some horrible cameras and sub-par gameplay. ECM is crazy for liking this.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	7	5	6	9	68

Teeter: Maybe...MAYBE if I hadn't played the bliss that was *Goemon* this month I would've looked on *T'ai Fu* with a kinder eye, but alas, that is not to be. *T'ai Fu* is a woefully misdirected, yet strangely inspired game that ultimately fails. Why? First of all, the whole camera style (while unique) is incredibly confusing. Plus, the basic punch-punch-kick thing just doesn't work anymore. With a little more work, this could've been a contender... too bad it's just a purrin' kitten.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	7	4	8	6	60

Fury: Animal inspired games have, since the day I was forced to review *Marsupilami*, ignited a deep, painful fire in my psyche! I had hoped *T'ai Fu* would not bring about a relapse of unpleasant memories but alas, poor control and broken camera angles have kick-started a depression even Freud would find hard to remedy! Like Teeter, if I hadn't encountered the sheer joy of *Goemon's Adventure*, I might've been inclined to give T'ai Fu a much more favorable score.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	6	5	5	7	70



Bust-A-Move '99
PlayStation
Acclaim
Puzzle

ECM: Another year, another *BaM*. A couple of years ago this game was all the rage. As your typical 'waste my college years sleeping and playing games' American higher ed student I blew many an hour better spent studying on the original Neo Geo wunderkind. However, after a legion of *BaM*'s and countless other clones this is 'been there, done that' old hat action. Give me *Devil Dice* or *Puyo Puyo* (still can't get enough of those magic beans) any day over this.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	8	7	7	3	75

Teeter: Like its Nintendo cousin, *Bust-a-Move* is just about the best puzzler game out there, minus *Tetris* of course. It's so simple, yet so addictive you'll play all day. I'm pretty sure that most of you have already dabbled in *Bust-a-Move* land already, but give this one a go... do it for Johnny! Virtually identical to the N64 version, the only real difference is that this one loads. Again, you simply have to play/own this game. It's something to treasure.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	10	10	7	2	92

Fury: Although I never really bothered to give *Bust-A-Move* much of a go in arcades, I have managed to fall victim to the clutches of addiction after playing through the PS version for a few hundred hours. This is the puzzle game I've been avoiding for fear that I might lose what semblance of reality I've managed to obtain in a life comprised of video games and No-doz! I need sleep, I need piece of mind and most importantly I need to destroy the *Bust-a-Move* ROM!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	9	9	6	4	90



Point Blank 2
PlayStation
Namco
Gun Game

ECM: Unlike most other arcade rats, *Point Blank* never did anything for me. Why play a silly little gun game while man's games like the *Virtua Cop* and *Time Crisis* series continue to amaze (not to mention *HoTD*)? Sure, it's fun for a while, and if you have a friend and duelin' GunCons, a fun evening can be had. I'm just getting tired of the whole deal. Teeter, Fury, and Eggo can keep this silly little disc. I'll be out gunnin' down gangsters and zombies, Ash-style... "groovy".

G	C	P	M	O	Score
6	8	7	6	7	78

Teeter: Aah, the gun game. Point at the screen and waste everything. But *Point Blank* is a little different. First of all, it's fruity (and that sorta thing goes a long way in my book). Secondly, it's not that violent. I know, I know... you're STILL shooting things, but trust me, I don't think the bubbles mind that much (I'll be hunted down by the BPA — Bubble Protection Agency. Go blame Namco!). Better than the original? Of course, but not much more than that.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
6	8	7	7	8	85

Fury: I've always associated gun games with non-stop violence and plenty of action-packed scenarios but man, can this game get addicting. True, *PB2* might not have the killer graphics found in *Time Crisis* or *Virtua Cop* but it does have math equations and that's got to take some serious nerve for a company to put in a video game! *Point Blank* is like the variety show of gun games and that's about as original as it gets. Break out your NRA member's card and fire away!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	8	9	6	10	83



Capcom loves you... that's all there is to it. They knew gamers would buy *Alpha 3* on the PS even if it had its share of problems, but why not go the extra mile... 33 selectable characters!! Without a doubt the most impressive looking 2D fighter I've ever seen appear on a home console! You have to get this game! You won't be disappointed! If you're thinking this is just another *SF* game on the PS then you're gravely mistaken... this is **THE** *SF* game on the PlayStation!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
10	10	10	10	7	98



Street Fighter Alpha 3 on the PS is a marvel; a stunning example by Capcom of just why we should never let a system's supposed 'limitations' cloud our expectations. Better than the arcade, this is the finest *SF* ever to come home and by FAR the greatest fighting game ever created. This is the best PlayStation game I've ever played. 2D power is so incredible when it's in the right hands, and Capcom definitely knows their stuff. How much sleep have I lost?

G	C	P	M	O	Score
10	10	10	10	9	100



Of all the boys of GF, I'm probably the most critical of the series. Why? Simply put, it's gotten incredibly old and stale down through the ages (well, it seems like ages anyway). However, I can still say that this is something special, given that the Vs. games are a nightmare on PS. Blazing animation, solid SF-gameplay, and the return of Guile (Jen Seng is probably dancing the happy dance right now)! Heck, it even managed to suck me in for a round or three.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
10	9	9	7	5	90



Street Fighter Alpha 3
PlayStation
Capcom
Fighting



When others talk of the cliched 'good old days' of gaming, they speak of *Asteroids*, *Pac Man* and so forth. But for me, it's all about *Double Dragon*, *Final Fight* and of course, *Rampage*. I love this game; I always will. Smashing buildings has never been this much fun, and probably never will be... fine by me! *Universal Tour* only makes it better by adding a few extras to the cast, but the game's basically the same. Go play it, now! *burp*

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	7	5	7	5	88



Growing up in arcades, I fondly recall the times I spent jumping around, trashing towns, and punching people in the face... And then I found *Rampage* — a game after my own heart. I couldn't say "No" to a monkey that shared my name, and the desire to eat people and pummel trolleys never gets old... even in the late '90s. This game is timeless, and none of that old glory has been lost. In fact, Midway even added stuff. Yippee!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	9	6	4	90



It's a nice change of pace seeing some people up here with me that actually respect *Rampage*. One of the greatest classic games of all time, this latest update in the series will be a welcome sight for those that still revel in its simple gameplay and 2D visuals. While the rest of you cry and complain that it's "too simple" and "I'm tired of the game" all I have to say is you're jaded. If anybody actually gives this game more than half a chance it'll grow on you... I promise.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	9	5	3	89



Rampage 2: Universal Tour
PlayStation
Midway
Action



Bust-a-Move is, after *Tetris*, the best puzzle game out there. Oh I'm sure some of you out there will disagree, and wave countless *Puyo Puyo*, *Baku-Baku* and other 'animal-bean' inspired contenders at me, but so what. People love this game; I love this game. You might not know it yet, but even you probably love this game. What's not to love? It's so addicting it hurts, and I'm glad the N64 finally snagged this one. Go get it!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
6	9	10	8	5	94



If you play puzzle games, you have to play *Bust-A-Move*. In fact, you don't have to just play it... you have to worship it. Keep it under your pillow when you sleep and play it every day until you're capable of stomping all your friends, like I do to El Niño. It's the be-all-and-end-all for N64 puzzlers (just don't expect a spectacular 4-player mode, because you'll go blind scrutinizing that tiny screen). Cuz c'mon, *Tetris* gets old after a while, right? ...Right?!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
6	9	10	7	6	91



Unlike the PS, with the likes of *Puyo Puyo* and *Devil Dice* offering up any competition, *BaM* is the only game in town on N64 (outside of *Wetrix*...<ack>). A better version than PS owners get (no loading, better modes) this is the only way to go if you have to get your puzzle fix from the "fun machine" (talk about ill-conceived ad copy, <ick>). As for Eggo and his "*Tetris* gets old" spiel, well, I'll still take falling block madness over marble madness any day.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	8	7	7	5	80



Bust-A-Move '99
Nintendo 64
Acclaim
Puzzle



Being a sports car fanatic, I can't help but cringe at the sight of the newly revived VW Beetle (I'm sorry, it's a woman's car). But a game based on a woman's car is a whole 'nother story (I don't have to be seen driving in it!). *Beetle Adventure Racing* is a great looking N64 game and the tracks are easily the longest I've seen in any racer. If you can get over having to control such lame looking cars then you definitely should check this one out. Herbie's waiting.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	7	8	6	8	88



At first I was skeptical, but then I became a believer. *Beetle Adventure Racing* is plain ol' fun. And while the wackiness may drive you away a bit (unless you're Teeter, and cling to that sort of thing), there is some good, solid racing to be had here — something sorely lacking on the N64... along with a good fighting game, hmm... Long tracks, lots of shortcuts, a beat you can rap to, and a bunch of hidden stuff... *BAR* comes highly recommended.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	9	8	9	92



I'll get flak for this, but I'm not a big fan of *BAR*. Unlike everybody else around here I can't stand the choice of vehicles (chick car, chick car) and with *V8* in the building I had a hard time tearing myself away from car combat for some fruity racing action. The game does have its charms, though, with some great locales and clean, 'almost Expansion Pak quality' graphics. The *Felony 1179*-inspired gameplay is nice, but in the end this one's going to the used car lot.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
9	7	7	5	9	79



Beetle Adventure Racing
Nintendo 64
Electronic Arts
Racing



While I tend to avoid the whole car-combat scene, I was pretty impressed with how *Vigilante 8* turned out on the N64. Compared to the PlayStation, this one graphically makes that version weep in jealousy. If you haven't already purchased the ram pak for your N64 you should have your head examined by Dr. Kevorkian. Personally though, I'd like to see an end to this genre in the worst way. I'll save my road rage for the good ol' LA freeways! Merge NOW!

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	6	7	7	3	79



You take the king of car combat on the PlayStation, tweak the visuals under the N64 high-res knife, and what've you got? Other than a million-seller, you're looking at Activision's *Vigilante 8* on N64. To me, one of the most impressive aspects of this game isn't the graphics (which are awesome), but the music. I'm getting seriously burnt out on this genre, but if you like car combat, wacky characters, and zany attacks... then look no further.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	8	9	8	88



It's good to be the king. Now that *V8* has finally made its debut in the 64-bit realm replete with the peripheral of the year (the Expansion Pak makes ALL the difference), all you PS-hatin' freaks out there have something to crow about. While it's a little late, and the gameplay has started to show some wear, those that were left without a car combat game till this point can now have their turn. Now excuse me while I pummel Eggo some more... Teeter is beneath notice.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	7	7	8	87



Vigilante 8
Nintendo 64
Activision
Combat Racing



A quality 2D Konami game on the Nintendo 64?! Why *Goemon* and not *Castlevania*??? Is there no justice in the gaming industry? Who's to blame for this madness? So with that said, *Goemon* is simply awesome! This is what 2D games should look like on the N64. While I'm not all that fond of the *Goemon* character, I need to again remind companies that there are still gamers out there waiting to play 2D games! Lead on *Goemon*, lead on! *Viva la 2D!!*

G	C	P	M	O	Score
9	10	10	8	7	95



See it and weep. When I look at *Goemon* and its 2D gameplay, I keep thinking the same thing: This is what *Castlevania* (I'm taking the franchise's name in vain at the mere mention of it) on N64 should have been. Long live 2D, side-scrolling gameplay! Developers, if you're listening, we like games like this... not the polygonal monstrosity that was *C, C... Castlevania* <ptooey!>. Though I'm not big on the fruitiness, I don't mind it when it plays like this.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
9	9	9	8	7	90



Broken record time: This should have been *Castlevania* on N64. Now that I've gotten that off my chest I can say that I enjoyed *Goemon*'s 3D outing last year, but this is where the series belongs. Back in its familiar 2D surroundings (minus the horrific PS rev) it shines as the best platformer released since the magical *SkullMonkeys* on PS. Clean, colorful (albeit fuzzy) graphics and rock solid bring-tears-to-your-eyes gameplay make this a must-have N64 experience.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
9	9	90	7	7	92



Goemon's Great Adventure
Nintendo 64
Konami
RPG


By not taking from others, you are accepting your own limitations.
By not giving to others, you shall be lonely at the top.
By creating new places to roam, and sharing them with those near and far, you promote appreciation for a higher level.
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and be worshiped as a deity
among players everywhere,
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The ultimate memory card,
going beyond mere game saves.
It allows you to upload saves
to your PC so others can download
and begin where you left off.
And they can reciprocate.
Take levels, characters, or team rosters
off the web and take your gaming
even higher.
Play. Save. Trade.
Greed is good. But so is generosity.
Because in this life, and the next,
what goes around,
comes around.
If you choose not to give to your friends, you may have to give up your friends.
If you choose not to take from your friends, you will remain the amateur little novice your friends always said you were.
If you choose not to accept the characters that others have created, you will learn nothing, remain stagnant, and die an early, painful death.
DexDrive
good karma
PlayStation®
DexPlorer™
Nintendo®64
download saves at www.dexchange.net

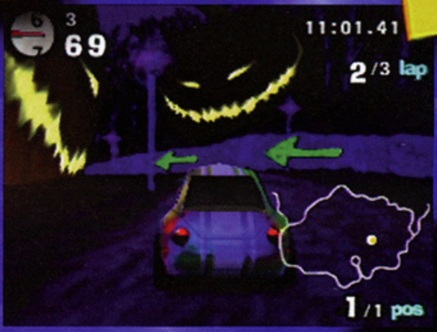
This Bug's For You!

Beetle Adventure Racing









During the past month, many changes have taken place in the lively *GF* offices that the average outsider would have ordinarily deemed impossible: ECM was a potential contestant for the cable gameshow *Win Ben Stein's Money*, Eggo finally developed a resistance to game-induced motion sickness (welcome to the wonderful world of *Quake2*) and I, the always cheerful, yet somewhat humble Teeter was actually genuinely interested in a racing game. Signs of the apocalypse? Perhaps, but even religious disasters couldn't tear me away from what has to be the feel-good racing game of the year: *Beetle Adventure Racing*!

I had to like this game. There just wasn't any way around it, this was too good to pass up. Think of the possibilities: A racing game, starring the Volkswagon Bug, the fruitiest car ever conceived. Doesn't that just scream originality? But wait, there's more! How about adding the most massive tracks ever seen, speed bursts, dinosaurs, pirate ships, Egyptian temples, UFO's and yes... a fruity announcer? Sound like fun? You bet it is, but it only gets better from there.

Beetle Adventure Racing is a very strange (albeit very cool!) mixture of the serious racer with a dash of good ol' fashioned *Kart* fun (as in *Mario*). Hey, even I was fooled at first into thinking of this as a serious racer, but one look at the stage Inferno Isle and you'll know something's not quite right. Obviously, umm... 'inspired' by the movies *Jurassic Park* and *Ronin*, your spunky little Bug zips through the actual J-Park itself (complete with roaring T-Rex... now THAT'S cool!), then proceeds to zig-zag through closed-in European streets. Of course these locales don't mesh naturally, but who cares? It's almost too much fun, and this is just one small example why *Beetle Racing* definitely has the most original tracks in the history of racing games. Even Reubus, with his *Choro-Q* lovin' attitude adores this game. Heck, everyone here at *GF* was impressed by this one — not an easy task for a game, let alone a racer!

The graphics are great, if not a little mix-matched. It looks like the cars are high-res, but the backgrounds are







 SUPER TEETER: LOVE THE BUG! | DEVELOPER - PARADIGM | PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS | 1-4 PLAYERS | AVAILABLE NOW | VIEWPOINT SCORE :96

standard N64-ized fuzzy. What's also interesting is the way that the backgrounds conceal nearly 95% of the pop-up and draw-in. Even more amazing when you consider that this game NEVER chugs in single-player mode, although a few of those precious frames do go out the window in multi-player... (we'll miss 'em *sniff*). But even with a few snags here and there, these are still some of the best graphics for a racer yet, either 32 or 64-bit.

ture Racing

The control's tight, proving once again just how great analog controllers are (down with Bubba and his nonsense!). Unfortunately, some of you out there may not like the less realistic feel that *Beetle Racing* has, but I for one love it! Like pushing a little stick around is in any way gonna resemble a real steering wheel... come on!

The sound, on the other hand, is a bit grating. The music (if you can call it that) just sorta boops 'n bops along at a steady pace (Waka rapped to the entire track... hilarious!) and never really goes anywhere... bummer.







The Feel-Good Racing Game of the Year!



But the sound effects are great, with horns 'a blazing, screeches, explosions and, like I mentioned above, one truly fruity announcer. But what caught me off-guard are the bonus voice-overs sprinkled here and there on the levels (hint: try running into the payphone on the Coventry Cove... good stuff!).

And then there's Beetle Battle... oh my. Imagine a game within a game, that's almost good enough to buy on its own. But you don't have to, it's already in here! Imagine *Mario Kart*-ish battle modes mixed with a *Vigilante 8*-ish flair, and you've definitely got the makings of something great. The object? Compete against three other players in a desperate race to collect all of the neon-colored ladybugs! It's a retro free-for-fall that's nasty, insane and tons 'o fun! The only drawback is that the new tracks have to be unlocked by playing through the regular game (hint: find all 100 bonus pts)... not that that's a horrible punishment or anything!

But beyond all that, it's how *Adventure Racing* plays that truly sets it apart from everything else. It's sorta serious, and sorta not. But that's the beauty of the design: being able to drive like a serious racer (e.g., *Gran Turismo*) or a *Mario Kart*-ish game. The purists will be able to finish the tracks as quickly as possible, while others (myself included) will go hog wild discovering all the little extras that are hidden EVERYWHERE. Boxes are scattered all over the place, and the more you collect the better the payoff in the end (I won't ruin it for you... heh heh!). Plus, there's just so many little side-trails and fun extras that you'll find yourself going over them again and again (but if you're anything like Reubus, make sure to get watered and get enough sunlight). Incidentally, this game was co-developed by Paradigm, the company responsible for Nintendo's *Pilotwings* and the development of several U.S. Army simulations!



Not only is this the best racer on the racing-impaired Nintendo machine, but it's one of the best racers... ever. Hey, I didn't think it was possible either, but it's true. Sure, it can't begin to compete with *Gran Turismo's* variety of cars, or *Ridge Racer's* soundtrack, or even *Rally Cross's* blazing graphics... but it stomps them all in the most important area: fun. Just remember, this game ISN'T that realistic, but it's better for it. **ST**

Questions with Scott Blackwood Producer of Beetle Adventure Racing

GF: *Beetle Adventure Racing* is the first game of its type, combining adventure and racing elements together (hence the name...duh!). Why did EA decide to go this way, instead of a more traditional "straight racing" style?

SB: We all felt that it was time to branch out of the traditional racing genre and create something completely fresh and unique. As most N64 owners know, the (traditional) racing category is pretty cluttered, to say the least. Here's a platform with, quite frankly, too many predictable racing titles in its library and not nearly enough novel approaches. Like most gamers, I'm a huge fan of traditional side-scrollers, and after years of working on the *Need for Speed* franchise, we started to envision a way that you could combine the "white knuckle" arcade racing experience with the exploration and discovery elements of an adventure game. Given the platform, this seemed to be the ideal route to take.

GF: How do you think players used to more realistic racers (i.e. *Gran Turismo*, *Ridge Racer*) will take to *Adventure Racing*'s unique hybrid mixture of realistic/wacky style?

SB: We're pretty confident that *Beetle Adventure Racing* will cater to a broad audience base. The great thing about this game is that the actual "racing" element is strong enough to keep the attention of the traditional player. Once that hooks them, they'll start to notice (purposely or by good fortune) the lack of "limits" in the game... all the freedom, the huge alternate routes, the hidden areas, the breakable walls and items... once that happens, I think any "learning curve" will disappear and the way these players think about "racing" games will have been changed for the better.

GF: With the success of games like *Mario Kart* and *Diddy Kong Racing* on the N64, do you see *Adventure Racing* as a stand-out game because of its similar "kart" influences?

SB: *Beetle Adventure Racing* most definitely stands out thanks to its incredible track design, the deep Championship modes, diverse effects and rich textures, and the sense of controlled chaos that the game creates for the player. Of course, games like *Mario Kart* have a huge appeal across the gamer spectrum, so we aimed the essence of our title towards the "all-ages" market. That being said, I think the new Beetle makes the game extra special, and our Beetle Battle mode is the inch-thick frosting on the cake!

GF: Beetle Battle is outrageous! What made you guys decide to put something like that into a game that was already pretty wacky?

SB: We are quite proud of how Beetle Battle turned out. In developing the game, we all recognized that multi-player is where it's at. Having a good multi-player mode ensures more public interest in a title. Having a GREAT multi-player mode puts a console game, especially an N64 game, in very distinguished company. It just seemed like a natural extension of the in-game hijinx to have 2-4 players duke it out groovy hardcore-style with rockets and other goodies while dashing to collect a series of colorful ladybug icons. To be quite honest, Beetle Battle mode turned out better than we had hoped... As a result, you can bet that there will be late nights and trash talking and shouts of "Hail to the King, baby!"

GF: By the way, what's your favorite *Herbie* movie and why?

SB: *Herbie goes to Monte Carlo.* It has everything: beautiful beaches, high stakes gambling, gorgeous women of the '60s, and a wacky, self-aware VW. It's between that and *Herbie 2: The Wrath of Khan.* :)

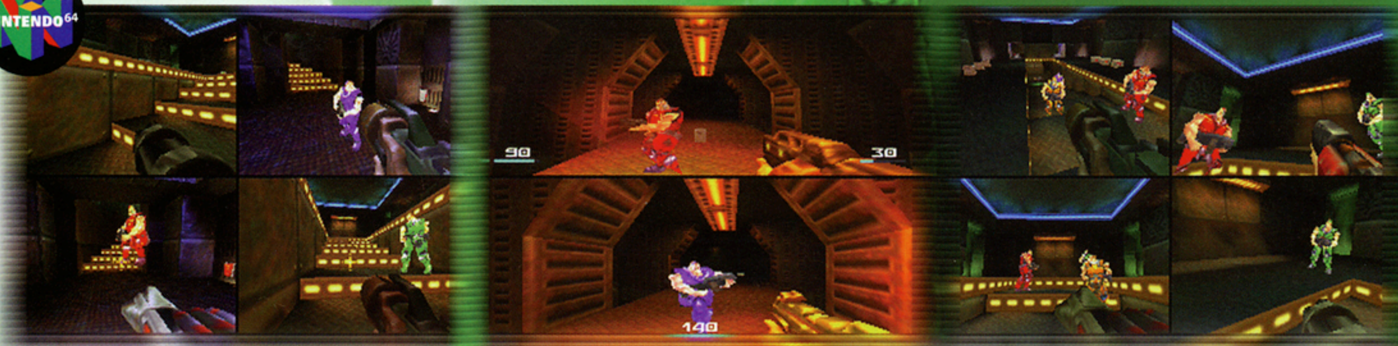









YOUR ROOM IS WAITING
EVERY TOWN HAS ITS SECRETS...SOME ARE DARKER THAN OTHERS.
WELCOME TO SILENT HILL. PLEASE CHECK YOUR SANITY AT THE DOOR.
YOU'RE HARRY MASON. YOU'VE CRASHED YOUR CAR OUTSIDE OF TOWN.
YOUR DAUGHTER IS MISSING. AND SOON YOU DISCOVER SILENT HILL
IS NO ORDINARY QUIET TOWN. IN FACT, IT'S A LITTLE TOO QUIET.
PASS BETWEEN THE "REAL" WORLD AND A DEMONIC NIGHTMARISH
WORLD, RENDERED IN REAL-TIME 3D, WHERE YOU'LL BE
ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT...AND THE EDGE OF MADNESS.
Don't be afraid of the dark. Be afraid of what it's hiding.
Use your brain. Use your brawn. And find your lost daughter, before you also lose your mind.
Friend or Fiend? is anything what it seems in this town?
PlayStation
MATURE M AGES 17+
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MULTIPLAYER QUAKE II!

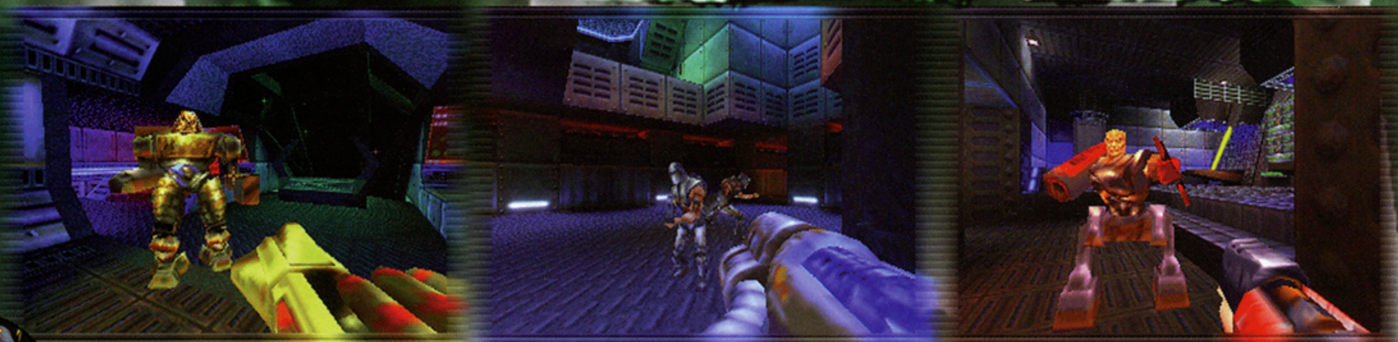
Welcome to the world of *Quake 2* on Nintendo 64. Marvel at the super-clean, 24-bit textures, vibrant hi-colors, and a raging aural assault. Now pinch yourself: You're dreaming. The above details may be true of the PC rev (minus the 24-bit textures), but those of you expecting a super-close port of *Quake 2* to the N64 can dream another dream, this dream is over. However, just because it isn't on par with its numbingly awesome PC counterpart, doesn't mean all is lost. Especially from the point of view of the gamer that has never played *Quake 2* before. I should also note that this is indeed a preview, though Activision did state that most of what is now present is final material.

Quake 2 exploded onto the PC gaming scene like a rocket-blast point blank in a camper's face (campers being the fellows that simply sit in the same spot on a level and pick people off as they run by... lamers, in other words). If it weren't for the redneck/hillbilly faction swarming Wal-Mart for their copy of the 'greatest story ever told' (*Deer Hunter*, for the uninitiated), it would have reigned alone atop the PC gaming heap [Eggo's note: A Crafty RTS by Blizzard might have something to say about that]. It contained the greatest multi-player experience known to PC-kind, and continues to hold that title to this day (*Unreal*? Yeah, right). It also featured a decent, 'We felt compelled to include it,' one-player contest. However, everybody knew that the real meat, of the blood-red variety, was to be found in its multi-player aspect.



The N64 version of *Quake 2* features a full-blown single-player mode as well as seven deathmatch levels. The one-player option is for those that have very few friends (or not enough N64 pads) and features level after level of monster-thrashing action. While this is all well and good (replete with completely re-designed levels), the *Quake* franchise has never been (and will never be) about the one-player aspect. Given that, the new levels are a refreshing change of pace for those that played the PC rev to death. Unfortunately, since the N64 is limited by the unholy constraints of 'cart power' (where have we heard that a thousand times before?), the levels are much less expansive and suffer from a severe case of claustrophobia. Gone are the vaulted ceilings and open arenas of the PC rev, replaced by a much more corridor-heavy level design (think *Tenka* or *Disruptor*). So while it's nice to rampage across the levels, blasting bio-mechanized freaks to chunky, squishy bits with the railgun and friends, it's not a major selling (or buying) point — it's all about multi-player frag-fests. Not to say, I suppose, that things couldn't change come final time.

As a multi-player game, *Quake 2* on N64 is looking relatively solid at this point. Gameplay is fairly quick and responsive, though things do get a bit framey and painful when four players are filling the screen with enough shrapnel and debris to make Dango's cluttered cubicle seem spartan in comparison (the boy raises chickens in that barnyard — chickens with BIG heads). Using a weapon like the railgun, which requires dead-on accuracy, becomes more an intellectual concept than something useful since your chances of hitting anything consistently requires as much luck as anything remotely akin to skill. Still, multi-player is the best reason to get *Quake 2*, and if Raster can tighten up the frame rate, even





ECM: Well, if you don't own a PC...

Developer - Raster Productions
Publisher - Activision

1-4 Players
Available Now





QUAKE II

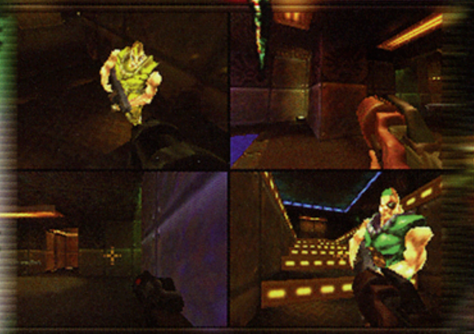
GoldenEye might have something to run for cover over (id Software is in the same building as Raster, so that can't hurt).

Graphically, *Q2* looks decent, although it seems they've made a number of changes to the basic look of the game. Beyond the fact that the enemies are now much more framey than they once were (thank you again, Mr. Cart), Raster has seen fit to also change the color palette quite a bit. Essentially they've brightened up the predominantly red/orange-hued levels by adding a smattering of blues and 'warmer' colors. While it's nice to see them trying something different (supposedly in 24-bit color), I'm not sure that people are looking for a friendlier-feeling *Quake* (I know I'm not). The blue railgun needs to go...

I now wait feverishly for the final N64 burn of the greatest PC game of all time (well, behind the venerable *Ultima* series, of course). If they can fix the erratic frame rate and clean up the graphics a little, Activision could be looking at a monster hit. If not, well, there's very little doubt that this one is still going to sell a bundle... here's to hoping it's on its merits as a game and not on the merits of its name (that never happens with N64 games... <cough> *Castlevania*, <hack>). **ECM**









VIGILANTE 8



If you remember my slightly larger-than-life preview of Activision's upcoming stab at the non-existent car combat scene on the N64 a few months back, you might recall that I spoke rather highly of the game. Well, not much has changed since that time, and I'm happy to report that Luxoflux and crew haven't screwed anything up, so the great things I promised way back when should be waiting for you in stores as you read this... convenient!

The graphics have been slightly spruced up since last time, fully taking advantage of the powers inherent in the awesome RAM pack... it's about time! Some neat-o lighting effects also seem to have been added, and I can't tell you how much fun it is to be able to destroy almost everything on-screen... what a stress reliever. Not that it was much of a problem last time around, but the little 'sweet' spots of slowdown in the preview (usually when four or more cars collided together on-screen at once) seem to have been eradicated. Best of all, the combos all work perfectly! So all in all, it's safe to say that this version now soundly pummels the PS one and all the clones that system has to offer. Yep, that includes every *Twisted Metal*, *Rogue Trippin'* (even with those exploding chickens...*sniff*) yada yada... Hail to the king, baby!







Car Combat - N64 Style!





Again, even though I'm bored to tears with this entire genre, I have to admit that the N64 version is still the best car combat game out there. The graphics are great, the music's funky and the control's right on the money. Plus, the 4-player mode (a feature which I strongly believe is a big reason for the N64's success) is perfect. The sequel, *V8: Second Offense*, is already underway and it's a no-brainer that it'll make an appearance on Nintendo's golden system as well. But I simply can't end this review without mentioning that as good as this game admittedly is, I still prefer the (in)famous Beetle Battle mode in that 'other' N64 racer featured this month, *Beetle Adventure Racing*. I dunno why, maybe I'm just a fruit (...why's everyone nodding?). **ST**







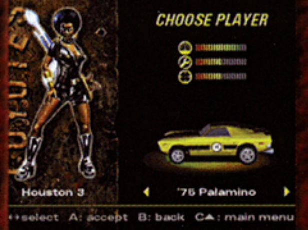












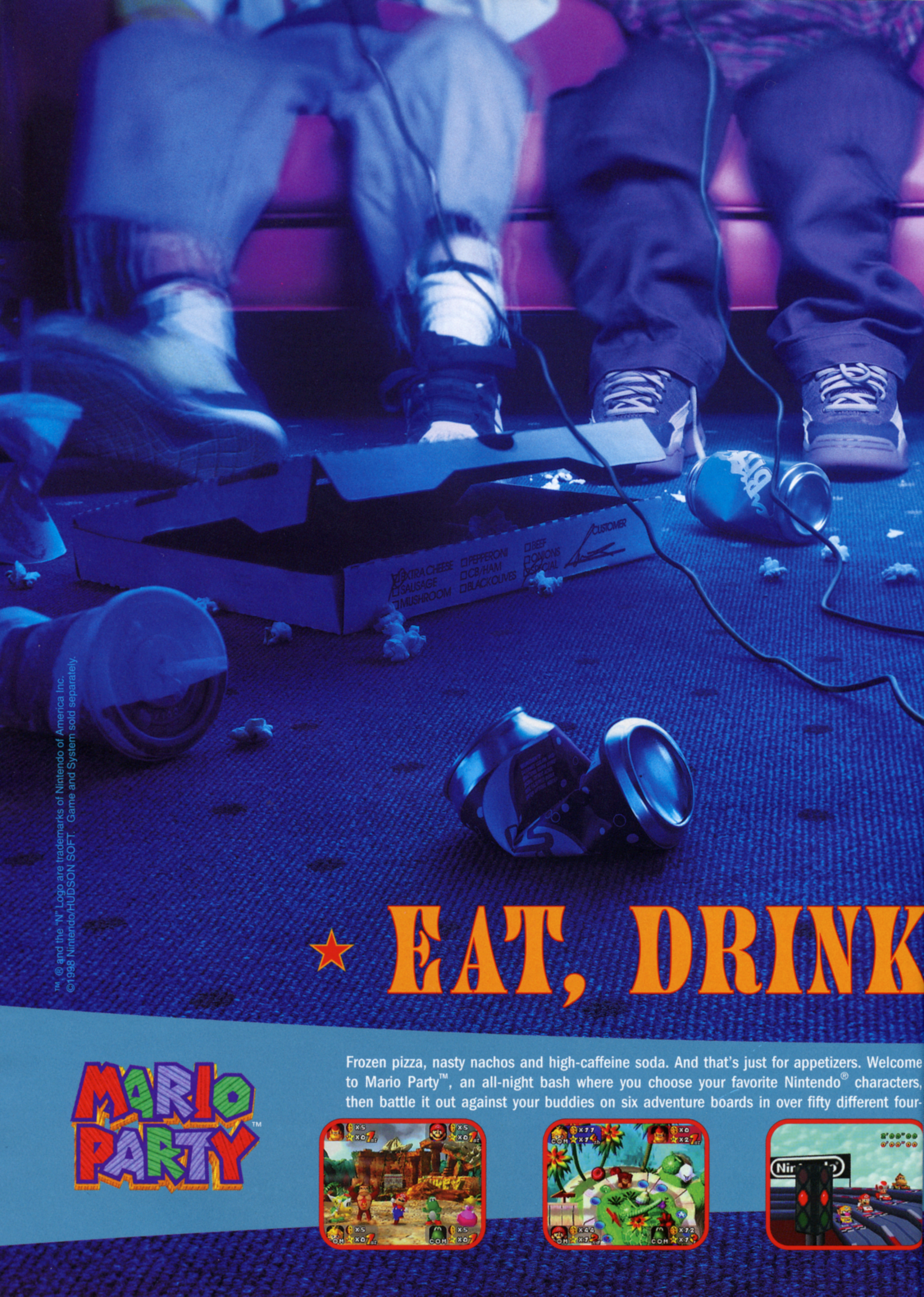








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Goemon's Great Adventure









SUPER TEETER: This is the REAL *Castlevania*!

Developer - Konami Team Osaka
Publisher - Konami

1-2 Players
Available May '99

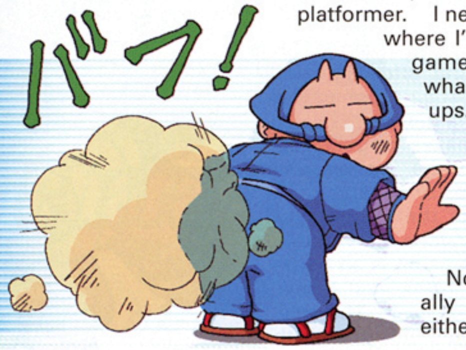
Viewpoint Score :98





The Wiseman of Iga has a surprise to show our heroes, Goemon and Ebisumaru. Always the inventor, this time he's outdone himself with his greatest achievement: The Ultra Gorgeous Electro Ghost Return Machine! With this nifty device, it's possible to return the dead to life and have a chat with a deceased ancestor. But just as Wiseman's about to give it a go, the evil (and crazy) Bisumaru arrives and snatches the machine away. Knowing her, she's up to no good, and this can't be allowed to fly. No worries, because Goemon returns to the N64, only this time he's back where he belongs: in 2D!

When most people speak fondly of 2D gaming, it's easy to think that they're talking about sprite-based gaming. To them, games in the third dimension just haven't cut it (even with masterworks such as *Mario 64* and *Banjo*), and perhaps they never will. But it's not the sprites these folks are missing, it's the gameplay... plain 'n simple. 3D games break the restraints of the 2D barrier and allow for berserk, free-for-all madness. Again, while this is fine for some, some gamers just need boundaries... I need boundaries, and when I feel the call, nothing works like a platformer. I need to enter that almost Zen-like state where I'm not just playing the game, I'm in the game... that's me making those jumps, whackin' the baddies and grabbin' the power-ups. Don't let my vacant, glazed appearance confuse you... I'm in heaven.



But, just to be fair, I whipped out the office copies of the PlayStation's best 2.5D games: *Wild 9* and *Klonoa*. After playing for a bit, I popped open the PS lid and laughed as I tossed them aside. Nothing out there compares. You've literally never seen graphics like this before, either at home or in the arcade. Sure, others

Japanese Fruity Madness... Love It!!









have attempted to re-create the traditional platformer with 3D graphics, but nobody's actually done it this well. It goes so far beyond scaling, beyond rotation, and other 16-bit staples; this is the next generation of platformers... on my Nintendo no less. Who'd've thunk it?

Thanks to the magical powers of the N64's sorely misused hardware, this game almost looks like it was hand-drawn... only sprites couldn't do what this game does. When there's another path in the foreground, it looks perfect... absolutely NO blurring or pixelization anywhere (how could it?)! Transparencies are everywhere, from the awesome jellyfish to the water itself (the whole swimming scene is amazing... Crash Bandi-Who?!). And what about those bosses? It's almost as if Konami re-hired the beloved Treasure team and made 'em work double-time... the bosses are incredible! When they're not bigger than the whole screen, they're attacking you from all sides in the most amazing ways. Seriously, I haven't seen bosses like this since *Gunstar Heroes*.











What anime-inspired game would be complete without an anime-inspired soundtrack? Complementing the stellar graphics is an amazing soundtrack. It might not be the techno-bliss that is *Castlevania*, but it's so different that it's cool in its own right. It sounds like every track is composed with traditional Japanese instruments, but with a techno-ish, happy anime flair... works for me! A game's only as dramatic as its soundtrack and I can only say how grateful I am (once again) to see Konami put the N64 sound chip through its paces.

The voices are so cool that every time you enter a tea-house or shop, you're greeted by a friendly "Irashaimase!" (Welcome!). Not only that, but Konami saw fit to leave in the opener's Japanese-drenched cinema (translated in subtitles, how very Kurosawa!).








And those sound effects? Let me just say that when I first heard Ebisumaru's paddle thonking a foe, I had to smile. Every single sound effect is so cartoony-realistic, it just adds so much to the game.

What makes a good 2D game isn't the graphics, the perspective, or anything like that. It's the gameplay. Don't let anyone tell you different, this game is so hardcore 2D it hurts, and I love the pain... oh yeah. The only thing 3D about this one are the graphics, that's it.

But I must stress that while this game plays 2D, it's incredibly simple 2D. No, not *Skeleton Warriors* simple (da,






da... dah!), but *Castlevania* simple. That is to say, it's very intuitive. Once you get a feel for the controls, you ARE Goemon, or anyone else from the cast (Sasuke is just the coolest...). I'm not saying the game's a cakewalk, but once you've got the feeling, you'll be double-jumping, butt-bouncing, and hack-'n-slashing your way to the end. Again let me stress how much I love this kind of game... love it too!

Once you're into the game, every character not only has their basic attack (Goemon's pipe, Ebisumaru's paddle, etc.), but they each acquire a second function. Sasuke gets a propeller (for swimming), Yae becomes a mermaid and Goemon gets a chain-pipe (it's the *Castlevania* whip, baby!). I'd tell you where to find these treasures, but then I'd have to to subject you to a kiss-fest from Bisumaru. Ugh.



I've said a bunch of good things about *Goemon's Great Adventure*, but I honestly, truly meant every word. Platformers might be rare these days, but they ARE coming, so just hang tight. I don't want to hear anyone complaining, because we NEVER had it this good when we were kids (I should know, I was there!). But most of all, this is the game you







What Castlevania SHOULD have been!



knew that fun machine could do all the time. Sure, it took awhile, but now it's here, so enjoy it. As for Konami, I wish I could fly out to Japan and give their President a big ol' hug of satisfaction, yet give him a piece of my mind as well. It's sad, really, because it's hard to play this game and wonder why this wasn't the next *Castlevania*. It's old fashioned, mindless fun injected with enough humor, attitude, and Japanese to make it work. Finally, a Konami platformer that's better than *Symphony of the Night*... Will Americans feel the same way? Who cares any more? I love this game and that's all that matters! Try it out and you'll love it too. Abayo! **ST**





The Characters



Goemon
The kid from Edo is back! Although prone to bouts of rage, he's always ready to lend a hand to his good buddy Wiseman.



Sasuke
The "mechanical ninja" created by Wiseman of Iga, whose favorite things happen to be baths and tea. Yeah, you read that right.



Ebisumaru
Self-proclaimed "Ninja of Justice" and roommate of Goemon, holds the record for downing 200 dumplings at Akindo teahouse.



Yae
Member of the "Secret Special Investigations Ninjas," her power and agility are unrivaled. Just don't call her girlish!

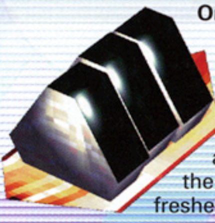
Items



Manekin Neko (Ceramic Cat)
Each cat powers your weapon up another level. Just remember getting hit reduces the power by one.



Tanuki (Raccoon)
Find this sucker and you'll know the level is over. HINT: Bash his head to get the Entry Pass!



Onigiri (Rice Balls)
Instead of dying when your last life bar is up, tasty rice snacks fall from the sky and revitalize you the way only the freshest rice balls can!



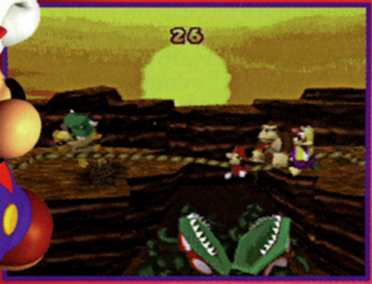
Tegata (Entry Pass)
Throughout the mission, you'll need these things to proceed. Part-time job, anyone?







MARIO PARTY





Think of the term "board game." Know why they call it a 'board' game? No, it's not because they have boards (although it does sorta make sense), it's because they're BORING! [Eggo's note: W, W, WHAT!?!?] Yes, it's true folks... sorry for dispelling an age-old custom, but in this day and age, dragging a musty board game out of the closet and expecting excitement city is only asking for trouble [Eggo's note: Get a rope...]. Luckily, Nintendo, with a little help from Hudson (y'know, the Bomberman folks) got with the times and decided to change all that. Enter *Mario Party*, one of the most incredibly entertaining and outrageous multi-player games... ever!




Weighing in at an astonishing 256-megs (only *Zelda* and *Turok* have thus far ventured into such high memory numbers), *Mario Party* is bound to change the way the world looks at the board game. For starters, it ain't boring! Everything starts to heat up when Mario, along with Luigi (nice to see him getting work these days), Donkey Kong, Wario, Yoshi and Princess Peach throw a party. The conversation turns to which of them is the biggest superstar ("When Game Characters go on Ego Trips — Film at 11!"), and Toad decides to settle it with an adventure... so begins the journey.






The game runs like this: players (1-4) are given turns around several giant boards. Much like any real-life board game, rolling the dice is replaced by a bopping your head on a block (very Mario-ish). Once you take your turn, the others do the same. After the fourth turn, then begins what we all came together for in the first place... mini-games!!! They might be 2-on-2, 1-on-3 or a frantic free-for-all (my favorite). The winner gets the winnings (gold coins) which can be cashed in for valuable items along the way, the best being the Golden Star. There's a TON of mini-games... about 56 to be exact. They range from pretty boring (think Dig Dug) to bizarre (everybody Limbo!) to plain ol' fun (Wario Bowling!). If three of your buddies join in, it's almost too fun (many a GF workday continued into the wee hours of the night... Zzz...). You have to try it out for yourself.





The only question that remains is this: Will this game sell well? Think about it. A Nintendo 64 game... starring Mario... intended for 4 players... I'il be shocked if this isn't one of the best selling games of 1999. If this is the future of board games, I'm all for it — grab a copy and party hearty... Mario style! **ST**

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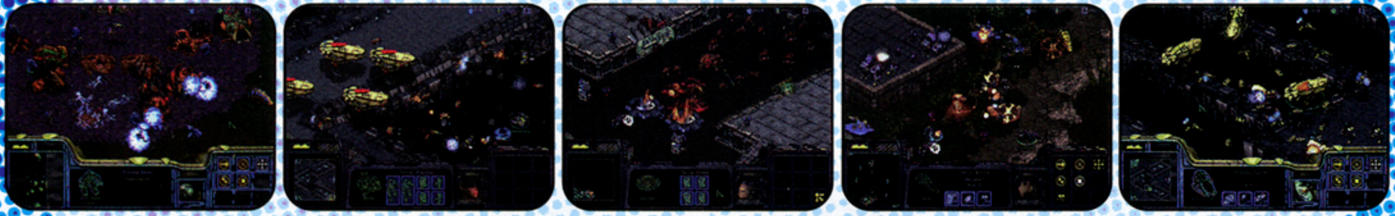
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NINTENDO 64



Command & Conquer 64 (EA)

Just as PC users are readying themselves for *C&C2*, N64 owners get ready for the original. (shots from PC version)



Starcraft 64 (Nintendo)

The most popular PC title of '98 comes to the N64, courtesy of Nintendo themselves! (shots from PC version)



California Speed (Midway)

Yet another racer comes to the N64 this year, complete with arcade-style gameplay!



Micro Machines (Midway)

Codemasters (minus that freaky Thor Ackerland) is back with their first Nintendo game in years... Multiplayer madness!



Rampage 2: Universal Tour (Midway)

Stepping on the heels of the PS version, the second N64 *Rampage* is almost here... *Gojira!*

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

Dreamcast

Sega Football (Sega)



It was sports that saved the Genesis, it will be sports that save the Dreamcast. *Sega Football*, developed by Visual Concepts, will be the first title in a string of sports games for the system. One of the game's producers is Joe Kidd, former GameFan sports editor, so you know the game will be good! We'll have more screenshots of this gorgeous title in coming issues.

"An Incredibly Addictive Masterpiece"

-PSM



PSM
100% Independent PlayStation Magazine

Devil Dice



PUBLISHER
THQ
DEVELOPER
Sony CEI
TYPE OF GAME
Puzzle

◄ *Devil Dice* looks like it's complex, but it's actually not too difficult to pick up.

AN INCREDIBLY ADDICTIVE MASTERPIECE

Devil Dice is, without a doubt, one of the most addictive and enthralling puzzle games to hit the PlayStation. The concept is simple: you control a cute little devil guy who must roll dice around a board (eight squares by eight squares) trying to align similar facing numbers next to each other. When you align an amount of dice equal to the numbers shown (for example: four dice with the number four showing) they all disappear from the board. But that's not all—added techniques include the ability to chain similar numbers to a set you've already completed, as well as the limited ability to jump to the floor and push dice instead of rolling them. The gameplay has the same hooks as classic games like dominoes and, of course, *Tetris*.

Once you get the hang of *Devil Dice* (which takes about ten minutes) you will be engrossed by its depth. Just the exhibition mode in which you fight rising dice trying to fill up the board is enough to justify the game, but it has so much more. A puzzle mode challenges you to complete certain patterns in a limited number of moves (a good way to learn the basics of the game). Two to five players can compete against each other in war mode, which is fun if not a little confusing. A head-to-head battle mode that's different from the war mode is included, as well as a cooperative exhibition mode. This literally has something for everybody, and it is just as much fun at a party as it is playing by yourself.



The graphics are fairly decent and the acid jazz soundtrack is even well done, but what makes this game so brilliant is its subtle level of addiction. *Devil Dice* will hook you almost immediately and keep you playing all night. In fact, more than one PSM staffer has been known to put off a deadline to squeeze in a game or two during the day. We can only go on about this game for so long before we get repetitive. Buy It. Buy it now.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GRAPHICS	3.5
SOUND	4.5
CONTROL	4.5
INNOVATION	5
PRESENTATION	4.5



GAME ★ SUMMARY

- ▲ Innovative gameplay makes for an addictive and extremely fun experience
- ▲ Several different modes of play provide a lot of gaming variety
- ▲ The jazzy soundtrack is catchy and perfectly suits the game
- ▼ Due to the sheer amount of chaos, multiplayer games can get a bit confusing

PSM Final Score: 5
One of the most fiendishly addictive puzzlers ever made

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

DEVIL DICE



Publisher: THQ
Developer: SCEI
Featured In: *EGM* #110

Number Of Players: 1-5
Best Feature: Totally Unique Gameplay
Worst Feature: Trying To Make Time To Play More
www.thq.com

9.0 I knew I was going to like Devil Dice the first time I laid my eyes on it. Like most successful puzzle games, Devil Dice's concept is simple yet deep, meaning any moron can learn how the game works in seconds, and puzzle veterans have enough there to keep them busy for weeks. At first glance, the game may look very intimidating, especially if you're watching players who know what they're doing. After all, this isn't your standard 2D cascading colorful blocks puzzle game. But once you sit through the great tutorial (one of the best I've seen in any game), you'll realize the game is very easy to get into. DD is made all the much better with a Five-player War Mode and a completely different Two-player Battle Mode. Both modes are frantic and a blast to play since the game allows you to steal combos away from the other players (part of the fun of everyone being on a single playing field). On top of that, the game has a fun Two-player Co-op option and a challenging Puzzle Mode (a very frustrating but ultimately satisfying game that has you solving little dice-clearing challenges, one at a time). If you're disappointed with the many mindless games on the market, please check out Devil Dice. It will keep your neurons blasting, and you'll have tons of fun. **And to think, this game was created on the Yaroze!** **Dan**

9.0 The One-player Mode in Devil Dice is a lot of fun, but it's more or less training for the intense multiplayer stuff. Don't get me wrong, the one-player game is very interesting but **I had the most fun when the four of us reviewing DD sat down and tried the Multiplayer Modes.** Sure, the game may seem confusing at first but all in all it's very cool. It has great graphics, sound, tutorials and an original concept. It's a buy. **Shawn**

9.5 A furiously addictive and original puzzle game that is so compelling that even your mom will probably go for it. The graphics are simple, well-defined and extremely effective, and the overall presentation is excellent. As a single-player game it's a fantastic experience that will keep you hooked for hours. **As a multiplayer game it's relationship-threateningly competitive.** Sushi nearly got lynched (and fired) for winning too much. **John D**

8.0 It warms my heart whenever I can sink my teeth into a good puzzle game. **Devil Dice has lots of originality** and has plenty of modes to keep up to five of your pals (yourself included) busy for weeks. The premise of the game (to match the face value of a die with the equivalent amount of connecting dice) is simple, but once you get into it, you'll be amazed at the depth of play involved. A terribly addictive (and fun!) puzzler. **Sushi**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	9	8

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- Official PlayStation Magazine



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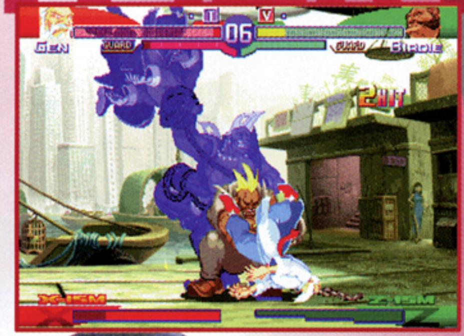
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If You Haven't Been Keeping Up On Current Events...

In case you missed my raving review of the import last issue, here's a brief recap: "Oh my god! This game is awesome! Look at the 2D power of the PlayStation! Long live 2D!!! <funeral bugle> The death of the turtle with the guard meter. Best fighting game on the PlayStation! Scratch that, best fighting game on any console (oh wait, there's a Saturn version coming)!" In other words, I liked the game. I also said something along the lines of "if they just localize what little text there is and bring the game out here, it'll be the best fighting game on any console." Well, it's only a month later, and Capcom hasn't tampered with the winning formula. All is right with the world, and we're in for one heckuva fighter in the near future.

The bar has been raised on what it takes to make a fighting game. Even the mighty *Virtua Fighter 3tb* on DC must give *SFA3* a nod of grudging respect. Not only is it the king of fighters, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* is also one of the final champions of 2D, hand-drawn graphics (a dying breed these days). We're huge fans of 2D games at *GameFan* and old school gameplay, two things which *SFA3* embodies.



Street Fighter Alpha 3





EGGO: It's a Street Fighter II class reunion!

Developer - Capcom
Publisher - Capcom

1-2 Players
Available Summer '99

Viewpoint Score :96









Where Once I Was Blind... Now I Can See
In today's world of brown games (e.g., the plethora of First Person Shooters), there are so few games which are pleasing to the senses. *Alpha 3* is a striking reminder of what a good game looks like: hand-drawn graphics, countless hues, vibrant colors which are full of life, multiple levels of parallax, and line scrolling. All this good stuff is present and accounted for in this future Capcom classic. I should just stop the rambling now to fill this space with more screenshots, because words can't do justice to the visuals of this game.












Sounds Great... Let's Rock!
The music in *Alpha 3* has been redone completely. None of the old, familiar (some would argue tired) themes from the past are in this *Street Fighter*. Instead, the soundtrack jams with a fast-paced, energetic, electric, techno-ish groove which fits the frenetic pace of the action like a glove. Considering the staggering number of characters and backgrounds in the game, it's impressive to see new tunes composed for each. While the sounds here don't fall in the "must purchase soundtrack" level, the music is well done and more than adequate for a fighting game.










STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

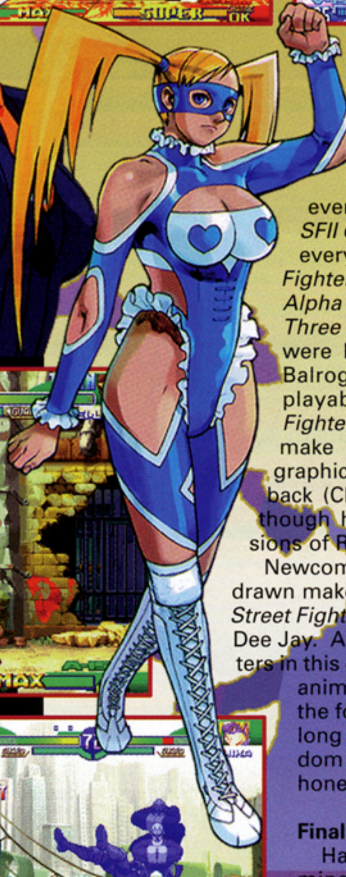
STREETFIGHTER AL













Street Fighter Roll Call

Taking a page from Namco's book of making the home game better than the arcade, *SFA3* is bristling with new features and more characters. You could even call this game a class reunion for all *SFII* characters. Hard to believe, I know, but every character who was ever in a *Street Fighter II* game is present and playable in *Alpha 3* (note: none of the new guys from *Three* are here). Characters who were hidden in the arcade (Bison, Balrog, Juni, and Juli) are now playable from the start. *Street Fighter II* veterans Honda and Blanka make a feisty return, with revised graphics. Even the infamous Guile is back (Charlie and Guile reunited at last!), though he's hidden... along with Shin versions of Ryu, Akuma, and Balrog.

Newcomers who also benefit from a hand-drawn makeover include the cast from *Super Street Fighter*: T. Hawk, Cammy, Fei Long, and Dee Jay. And don't forget that all the characters in this game are graced with extra frames of animation... Christmas comes early from the folks at Capcom. And while it's taken a long time to get here, there's **finally** a random select button which allows you to hone your all-around skills.





Final Fighter II?

Have you noticed that Capcom is cramming every *Final Fight* character into the latest *Street Fighter* games? The only all-star holdout appears to be Hagar. Maybe they're saving him for the next incarnation... *IV*, perhaps? Hmm... wonder when Poison (think police cap, cutoff top, and Daisy Duke shorts) is going to join the list of *FF* characters who've made it big under the flashy lights and glittery glitz of *Street Fighter*-land.







The Bad News

"More frames! More frames! My kingdom for more frames!" While *Alpha 3* plays a helluva lot better than its cursed *Vs.* brethren on the PlayStation, there are still frames missing in *SFA3*. So all you purists can huff and puff and cling to your dusty













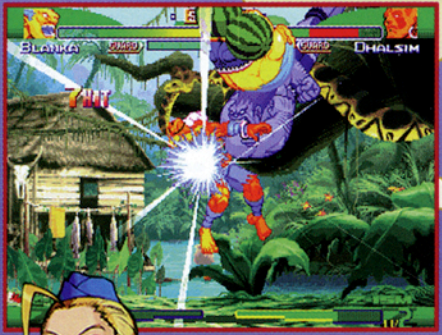


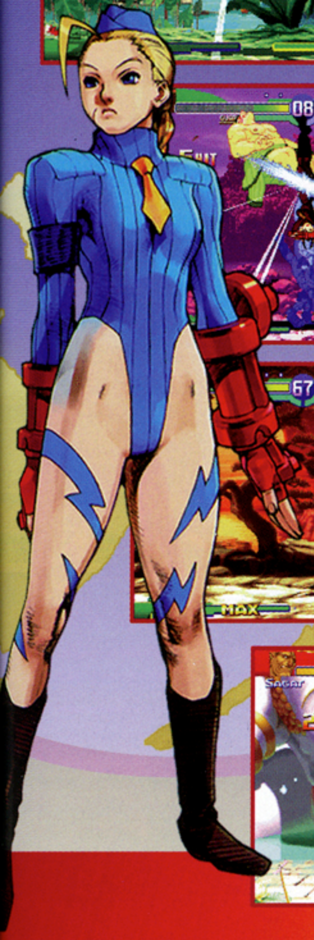


Saturn ports (coming soon). Me? I'll be playin' *A3* on the PlayStation with the rest of my friends.

Not to say that the frames aren't in the game. I can assure you all the animation is in the PlayStation version... you just have to pick the same character to see it. Sadly, without a 4 meg RAM pack, the only time the PS can has enough memory to 'remember' all the frames is when it doesn't have to load up a new set of animation for a different character. So you'll find Zangief is his normal, healthy self when faced with another Zangief; but once he leaves his homeland, the animation cleaver comes out and hacks out a frame here and there. Thankfully, most of the characters are still well-animated, and the gameplay doesn't suffer... the same can't be said about those *Vs.* games <shiver>

Sure, I'm nitpicking, but one of the last faults I have with this game is the announcer. Instead of the classic "Round One... Fight!" *SFA3* now has a more vocal commentator who bears a striking resemblance to the *Ridge Racer* guy; he sounds the same and his comments are just as annoying (e.g., "Sharpen your fangs... it's not the end!" when you lose). Sure it's a minor point, but there's very little wrong with this game.



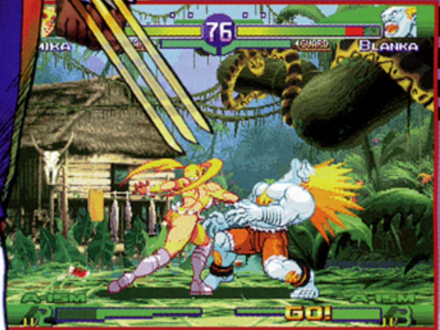


The Summary: Start Saving Now

There's not much more to be said here. The game's release date is a very tentative May, but keep an eye out for it because it's a must-buy. If you're a *Street Fighter* fan, buy this game; it's got something for veterans and rookies (like Teeter). If you like fighting games, this is the only one you need (well, that *VF3tb* is kinda cool too, but get this first). If you like 2D games, then you've gotta see *SFA3* and its rainbow of colors. Lastly, if you're just a casual gamer, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* deserves a spot in any gaming library. Unless you despise fighting games... then I suggest finding some friends and getting out of the house more often.

Special Thanks to combo master James Chen(sor) for his help.

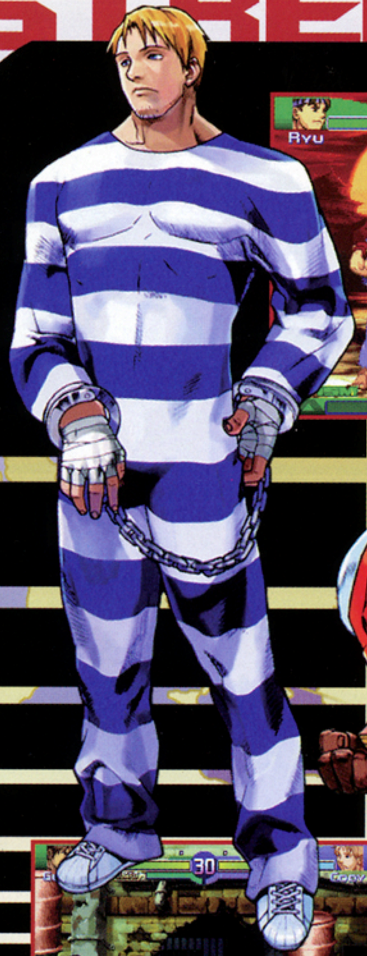


















That Little Something Special

Story has classically been a weak point of this series. Sure, Ken and Ryu shared a headband... and we all know where Sagat got that scar from, but interaction between the characters when they're not fighting (after hours) hasn't been discussed too much. Capcom develops a little more of that intangible with unique openers when you happen to pair up specific char-







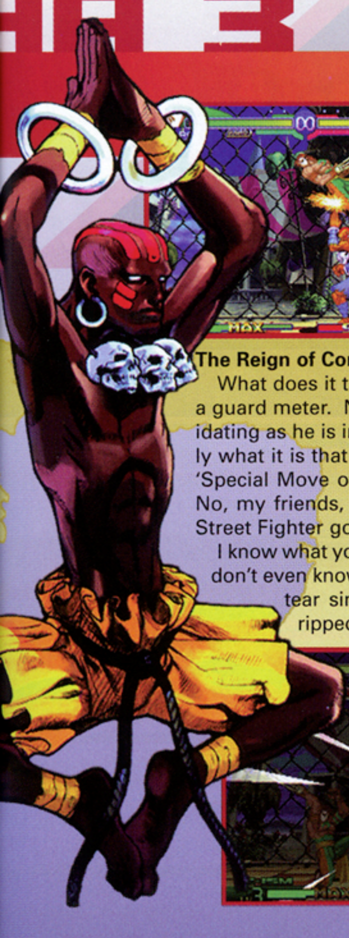
acters. Akuma and Evil Ryu greet each other with failed Raging Demons. Ken shows off that camaraderie with Ryu by giving him some noogies before they scrap. This is even the first time we get to see Guile and his old war buddy Charlie in the same game as they salute each other in military fashion. The number of unique openings goes on and on, and it adds a teensy bit to replay value (test those pairings!). Shown here are just a few of the greetings to look forward to... Check out Cody and Guy's entrance straight out of *Final Fight*! For a complete list of all the unique openers available in *Alpha 3*, check out this month's Hocus Pocus.













The Reign of Contorted Terror Begins...

What does it take to 'break' a fighting game? One move and a guard meter. Never before has the Bald Terror been as intimidating as he is in *Alpha 3*. I'm sure you're all wondering exactly what it is that has monsters like Zangief quivering in fear. A 'Special Move of Justice'? A 'Super of Death-Dealing Doom'? No, my friends, the overpowering move handed down by the Street Fighter gods is none other than... Standing Jab.

I know what you're all thinking — "Surely ye jest... most scrubs don't even know a jab button exists." Let's all shed a collective tear since the play balance of the mighty *Alpha 3* is ripped to shreds because of a wimpy version of the Atlanta Braves Tomahawk Chop. If you're one of those players who doesn't know where the jab button is, you'd better start looking, because this move is waaaay too good (when playing a scrubby X-Dhalsim).



While the once mighty Shotokans must perform that ancient ritual of moving the d-pad in three directions at once to muster a Dragon Punch, Dhalsim initiates can dismantle all sorts of jumping adversaries with the mere touch of a button. It's so simple even Fury can do it... alone... without asking for help! But to truly fill the ankle rings of a Dhalsim master, you'll need to two-in-one this jab with a Yoga Flame aimed upward. This simple yet effective 2-hit combo is damaging enough to discourage all airborne assaults from soon-to-be-hairless opponents. Try as you might to find a counter for the Jab of Death, high-flying Rolento seems to be the only remedy for the Dhalsim malady (and A-Dhalsim can roll Rolento). That puny jab hits 99% of the jumping moves in *Alpha 3* cleanly.

The other half of the equation which completely shifts the balance of power in Dhalsim's favor is the guard meter. Once he's taken the air out of his opponents' step, Dhalsim is free to poke away at that guard meter with Standing Fierce and a mix of Yoga Mummies and Spears... until they can block no more... then it's time to turn up the Yoga Heat! However, if you and your friends choose not to flex any stretchy muscle in your *Alpha 3* wanderings, there'll be no Yoga nightmares to worry about, and you'll spend many a night playing *SFA3* till the sun comes out.

Hurt Me More! ...I mean less!

Alpha 3 brings more than one new idea to the table, as most *Street Fighters* do. You already know about the three different -isms: X-ism (a character similar to *Super Street Fighter* with only a level 1 super, increased damage, but no alpha counters), A-ism (a classic character with alpha counters, multiple supers, air blocking, rolling, etc... just no custom combos), and V-ism (custom combos and an occasional new move, but no supers). There's also "no-ism," which has no supers or custom combos, but also no guard meter (for those who **really** can't stand that thing).

Other 'innovations' in the game are damage reduction, flipping out of the air, and counter hits. Damage reduction comes into play when you're getting pummeled by a multi-hit combo and can't do anything (kinda like when Fury steps up to the plate against me in *Alpha 2*). Simply hit a button at the exact instant you get hit in a combo, and your character flashes red and takes less damage in the combo.







Flip Out Over This!

Flipping out of the air and counter hits are part of the newer, more aerodynamic gameplay. Veterans may scoff, but *Street Fighter* has grown wings now (probably due to the tremendous success of the flashy, high-flying *Vs.* games also in Capcom's fighting game stable). A counter hit from a fierce or a roundhouse will send the enemy flying up high — the perfect opportunity for a nasty air combo. But Capcom wouldn't put evil air combos in the game if there weren't ways to counter them. Other than the aforementioned damage reduction, you can flip out of the air at certain points in many combos. Once you've backflipped to safety, you can attack or air throw your opponent. Course, they can always anticipate the flip and mess you up some more... but that's just a sample of what to expect. Shown here is an example of an ugly three super combo by Sodom if you flip out... and if you don't.









Battles that make you think!

From the opening lines of *Guardian's Crusade*, role-playing fans will get the unnerving feeling that they've done this all before. "Good morning! Wake up, wake up! Knight, wake up! Wake up, you sleepy head!" — the voice belongs to your flying fairy Guardian Angel who never lets an adventurer sleep in peace. It's that familiar opener to RPGs which we've seen a million times before.

Everyone's judgement on this will be different, but I can forgive *Guardian's Crusade's* biggest flaw... unoriginality. Because even though *GC* doesn't blaze many new trails in the role-playing universe, it's still an RPG... coming out in a game-starved climate — the pre-E3 dry spell where games (especially RPGs) are hard to come by. So while this game wouldn't have received more than a passing glance during Christmas, RPG fans will probably give this homely game more of a chance... until the arrival of the giants of '99: *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Suikoden II*.

So let's take a look... What does *GC* bring to the table? ...something ECM can't get enough of — **toys**. Here's the deal, *GC* is a single character RPG. You control Knight... a young, heroic, all-around good-deed-doer, and you've got one 'familiar' — a pink, pig-like, baby monster called... Baby (I'm so cute, I'll make you gag). "Quick, Doctor! We need more insulin! He's going into sugar-coated spasms!" <shiver> <shiver>



Instead of being able to control other party members, you can summon up to three toys per battle. These toys are magically crafted by Professor Zeppetto and each has its own personality and powers. Bring Pyro into battle and he'll continually toast enemies every round with his Fireball. Cupid and Kimoni are on healing duty with one-use spells like Life Arrow and Blessing. In addition to casting spells and attacking, the toys act as temporary party members, drawing enemy fire away from *Knight and Baby*... the original name of this game <brrr>.



Knight and B... I mean, *Guardian's Crusade's* best feature is the combat. Unlike *Tales of Destiny/Phantasia*, the random encounter rate is just right because you determine the frequency of the fights. Similar to *Saga Frontier*, you actually see the monsters roaming around the dungeons, and the combat doesn't begin until you bump into a monster. Another cool aspect of this game is that the monsters react to you depending on your level. If they're stronger than Knight, they'll chase him down. If you're a leveled up giant, the weaker monsters scurry away in fear (kinda like Bubba when playing *Quake II*). And if you're skillful, or a veteran of the *Resident Evil* school of zombie-baiting, you can dodge all unwanted random encounters.





What keeps me going in this game isn't the juking of monsters in dark dungeons, but the actual combat itself. RPGs that require some semblance of skill or strategy in the battles score high points with me. When was the last time you bounced magic spells off a barrier in an old *Final Fantasy* or set up a devastating, multi-character combo in *Tales of Destiny/Phantasia*? An rpg can quickly grow stale if the combat devolves to "fight," "fight," and, guess what... "fight."



EGGO: Haven't we met somewhere before? | Developer - Tamsoft | Publisher - Activision | 1 Player | Available Now | Viewpoint Score :80





5 Questions with Tamsoft

GF: What projects are you currently working on and what's next for Tamsoft? Are there any plans for a *Guardian's Crusade 2?*

T: We are always pursuing new projects that could expand the 3-D games horizon. As for the sequel to *Guardian's Crusade*, nothing definite can be said at this point, except that we are thinking about it.

GF: Who came up with the idea of the toys in *Guardian's Crusade*, and are you satisfied with the way it turned out?

T: The toys came from a member of our design team. The idea was one of the foundation blocks for the entire game. He says "Of course!" and also adds that "it is such a pity they are only virtual!"

Q: What are your thoughts on Square's making the *Final Fantasy* series more movie-like? Do you think it's the future for RPGs or is it straying away from what a role-playing game should be?

T: I am constantly amazed at the level of sophistication in *FF*, especially its 3D techniques. I am looking forward to even more advanced movie-like titles from the team. Going in that direction is certainly a very effective way to make attractive games. But imitating movies is only one of the many possible directions RPGs could take. We are always looking for better ideas and all creators should be doing that.

GF: Do you think American gamers appreciate RPGs as much as Japanese gamers?

T: I can't speak for the American audience, but I think one of the things the Japanese gamers are attracted to in RPGs is their vast space to play in. It is a chance for them to get out of their small, cramped world. That might be different from the US, where there is a lot of space.

GF: Do you still have "Nomo Fever?"

T: Nomo Fever is gone, a thing of the past. Now we are having Nakata Fever, which is about a soccer player who has ventured into the Italian league.



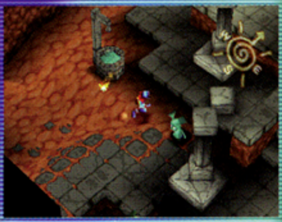








The wide variety of toys lets you customize your fighting style in *Guardian's Crusade*. "Timeout" is a toy which prevents both sides from inflicting damage for three turns (giving you time to heal or set up a nasty combo). "Baron" pays you rubees (money) for every 10% of damage taken. So do you bring out the Baron first thing in a fight, or do you go with Heal Bat and his ability to drain life from enemies and give it to you? Also, there are attacks which damage everyone, but you have a "defend" command to cut down on the 'friendly fire.'



Sadly, the story is just plain feeble. A stork drops Baby on a routine delivery, and Knight ends up finding it. From then on, you have dreams of an apparition telling you to deliver Baby to God's Tower, or else the Democrats will control the Senate and life will be over as we know it <gasp!>.



Graphically, *GC* runs on a very solid engine, sculpting a colorful, 3D world... which is a bit bland. And since the towns are completely polygonal, there's a good deal of dizzying, camera spinning required to spot all the secrets and doorways.

Bottom line, *Guardian's Crusade* does combat well, but the story and visuals are average at best. The game sticks you on a linear track, and most of the elements have already been done before. But if you're starving for an RPG, and you've finished *Zelda OOT* and *Xenogears* for the fifth time already, then you just might want to look up *Guardian's Crusade*. **E**

RAMPAGE 2 UNIVERSAL TOUR








More mindless mayhem, RAMPAGE STYLE!!






Ask any gamer who frequented arcades in the late '80s if they remember *Rampage,* and I guarantee that not only will they remember it, but they've probably dropped more than a few quarters in Midway's classic demolition fest. Companies today consider it a sound investment to try and re-establish these classics in today's ever growing gaming industry... if it ain't broke, why fix it? So leave it to Midway to do just that — welcome to a new breed of city-smashing, car-crunching, rampaging action [Ed's note: sounds like ECM come deadline].

For all those unfamiliar with *Rampage* allow me to explain... Take control of a large, disgruntled monster and destroy all buildings, vehicles, and people within the city limits. And while this may seem at first a bit, uninspired... tack on 3-player action and *Rampage* really begins to get interesting. It's a race against your fellow beasts to see who can cause the most havoc before the city is reduced to mere rubble.

Is that a giant crab? And what's that? ...a mutated mouse? OK, well despite the inclusion of some new characters and a bit of added animation, this is for the most part what you'd come to expect in a *Rampage* sequel. Me destroy city! Me crush tank... uhh ECM, you all right? Anyhow, like I said, this is merely *Rampage* with a "2" so cleverly attached to the title. Not like there's really anything wrong with that, but can this type of mindless mayhem find an audience in a time when PS owners have such juicy titles to sample from as *MGS* or the upcoming *FF8*? Well, based on the fairly recent success of *Rampage World Tour* on the PS and N64, I think that Midway might have yet another success story at hand.

Eat, Puke, and be Merry!

And while I did enjoy playing through *Rampage2 Universal Tour,* I feel that Midway might better serve the gaming public with the addition of more original titles not inspired from their pre-existing library of hits. Sometimes I guess it's just better to let dead dogs lie... Ma, why ain't Old Yeller movin'? **F**



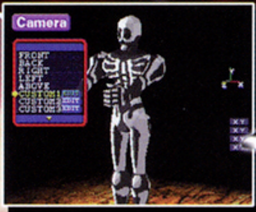



FURY: Where's Matthew Broderick?	Developer - Midway Publisher - Midway	3 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score :83

Fighter Maker




Have you ever wanted to develop games? Think you've got what it takes to create a dozen different characters with unique fighting styles? Well, Ascii is giving you the chance to do just that with *Fighter Maker*, a fighting game construction set.









FM gives you the chance to design or edit nearly every aspect of a fighter: collision boxes, damage potential, the movement for every attack, throws, and much more. Unfortunately, you can't actually modify the characters' 'skins' (their physical appearance), so you'll have to choose from one of the 20 fighters in the game, including Skullo from *Street Fighter EX* (and you thought he was a one-game wonder).







The level of interaction available here is just plain disgusting. If you want to dive into the deep end of fighting game sausagedom, design every move frame by frame... animating everything just the way you like it. Program in launchers, combos, throws. Always wanted a camel clutch? Well now you can. Or you can always rub your enemy's face in the dirt... The potential here is all up to your imagination, but I'll keep this preview clean for the young 'uns (we've got some particularly humiliating throws devised in office, heh).







Hidden behind the 'fighter construction kit' is a premade, 3D fighting game in a 2D plane, similar to *Street Fighter EX*. Make no mistake, there is a real game to play here if you just wanna fight; it even has three of the deadliest martial arts styles to choose from: Jiujitsu, Muay Thai, and Shaq Fu (well, two out of three isn't bad).





Getting back to the 'making' part of *Fighter Maker*, once you've designed a character to your liking, save it on a memory card and go up against a friend's Frankenstein creation. You've got to wait till summer for this one, but considering the many hundreds of potential hours it has, it should be well worth it. E

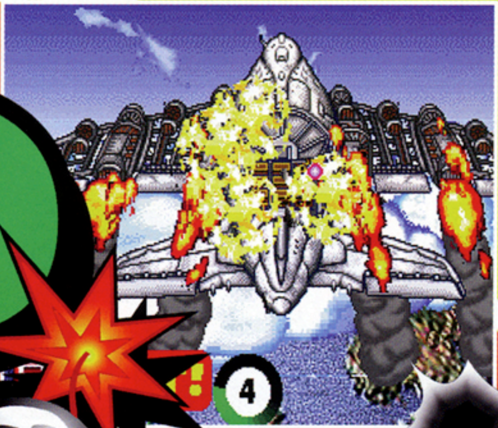






DEVELOPER - ASCII | 1-2 PLAYERS | EGGO: CHOOSE
PUBLISHER - ASCII | AVAILABLE JUNE '99 | YOUR DESTINY.

Point Blank 2







Those zany sharpshooters at Namco are back with a sequel that hits the spot — *Point Blank 2*. If you're like me and thought the original was dead on, then you'll definitely feel the sequel is right on the mark. Electing not to stray too far away from the targeted formula which made *Point Blank* such a hit, Namco brings back many of the original scenarios... with an added twist.

While *PB1* had you perforate a stationary car to blow it up, the revised version has you standing on the ground, looking up at a car falling from the sky. You've got 10 seconds to fill that dropping automobile with enough lead to save your scrawny hide. The stuffed animal at the carnival no longer shows you a picture of the animal you have to shoot. Now, you have to pay attention to the animal's cries. Was that the cackle of a rooster or an elephant's bellow?

The full range of skills are tested in this one — fast-shooters, one-shotters, brain teasers, hand-eye, don't-shoot-the-hostages, etc. You name it, and *PB2* exercises it... while never losing sight of the fun factor.

The multi-player mode is just as fast and wacky as ever... if not moreso, because of the wilder, more exciting contests available. Shatter the counting down stopwatch in the final .1 seconds. Or scrutinize two pictures and shoot the objects that are different (kind of a *Where's Waldo*-esque mini game).

Thankfully, Quest Mode, the only down-side to the original (Namco missed the mark with that one), has been replaced by a much better one-player blast-fest which has you choosing from an assortment of carnival-style games with a mild semblance of story thrown in for good measure.

The most aggravating part of my *Point Blank* experience had nothing to do with the game. I realized only recently that the newer PlayStations lack the standard yellow, red, and white A/V connections coming out the back of the console. They've been replaced (in the newer 'Stations) by a single multi-out cord... which means you can't hook the video cord from your GunCon to the back of your PlayStation. Instead, you have to run the GunCon's video feed through the connection at the back of your television. So if your 'Station isn't near the video input of your TV, it's time to buy an A/V extension cable. Either that, or you'll be shooting scrub-style, less than five feet from your television screen. How off-target is that?

Dangohead and I have come to the conclusion that everybody should like *Point Blank*. The original was just plain fun (a little mindless maybe, but that never hurt anybody), and the sequel is just as enjoyable. E













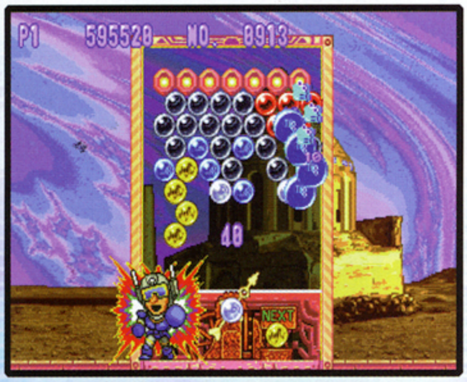
Developer - Namco
Publisher - Namco
1-2 Players
Available Apr. '99











Oh how I remember the college days and nights I spent playing *Bust A Move* in the arcade: lines and lines of challenger after challenger... quarter after quarter... and the game never lost its magic. Now, countless console versions later, I still think *BaM* is the best puzzle game on either the PlayStation or N64. Acclaim's latest, *Bust A Move '99,* offers a whole lot of new stuff, but the thing that keeps 'em comin' back is the classic two-player action.



If you're like Posty (or Fury) and have lived in a cave all your life, you're probably wondering what *Bust A Move* is all about. It's the best puzzle game out there, and the concept is simple: connect three or more balls of the same color and they'll disappear. Any extra balls attached to that group are sent over to your opponent's side randomly. If any balls dip below the line at the bottom of the screen, then it's game over (which is usually the case as soon as Fury picks up a controller).

You want different game modes? Try Arcade (which includes Puzzle and Vs), Challenge, Win Contest, Collection, or Edit on for size. And if you're expecting the classic version of *Bust A Move*, you'll be surprised to see eight characters (most of them new) and a bunch of strange-looking balls which you can't get rid of right away. I could go on and on about the plethora of puzzles or extras that await, but let's just leave it at this: If you play this game alone, you won't be bored.

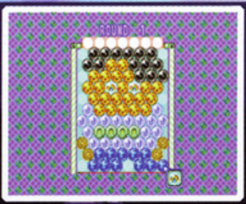
About the only problem I have with *BaM'99* is the loading time between rounds of the PS version. It's not horrendous, but it does break up the continuity when you just want to get to the next order of business (namely, slapping down El Niño — a former, self-proclaimed *Bust A Move* college champ).

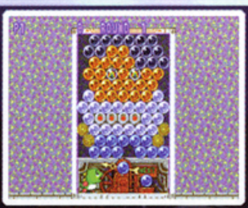


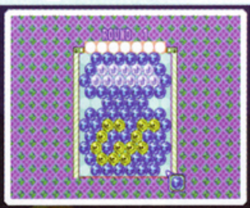


So if puzzles do it for you and you're not a *Tetri*-nut like Bubba, stop playing *Devil Dice* and run out to your local store and grab yourself a copy of *Bust A Move '99*... I just hope they don't make significant changes by the time *BaM 2000* rolls around. **E**

WHO'S THE PUZZLE MASTER, LEROY?





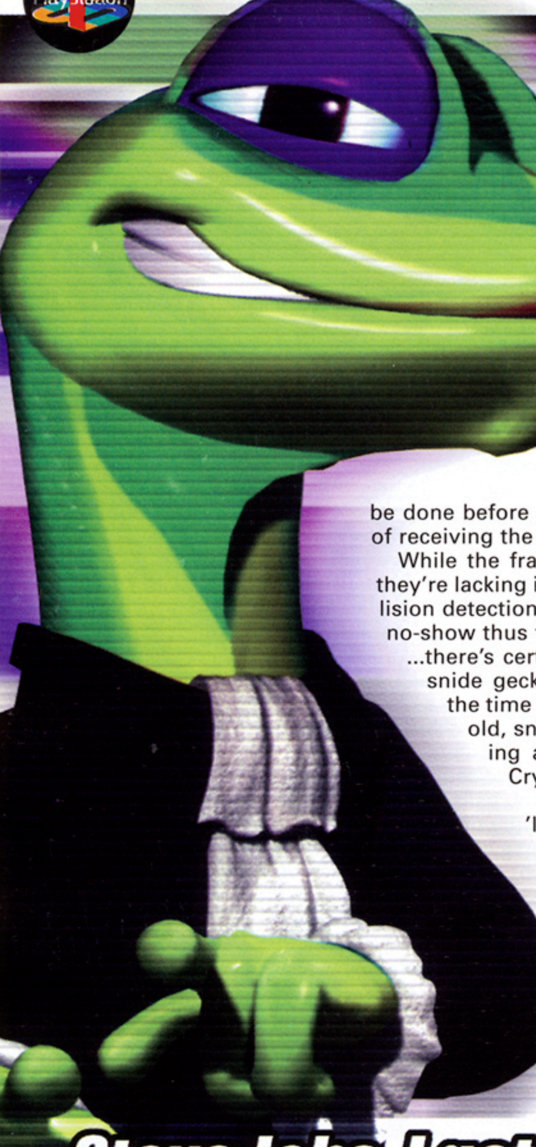


Think you've got what it takes to design a good puzzle? Looking for a way to express your creative juices? Got too much time on your hands? *BaM'99* has got just the thing for you: a level editor which lets you create your own levels from scratch. Using any combination of old balls or new, you can whip up a colorful masterpiece in minutes. Then just save it on a memory card to impress (or depress) your friends later.



BUST-A-MOVE '99

Viewpoint Score	Developer - Taito / Publisher - Acclaim	1-2 Players / Available Now	Eggo: Ryu, what are you doing here?
:91			



GEX
Deep Cover Gecko

I guess the majority of the crew at Crystal is burnin' the midnight oil to get *Soul Reaver* out ASAP, because it appears everyone's favorite wise-cracking Gecko has taken a hit in his third installment. Our previewable copy of *Gex 3* is still **very** early... Or I certainly hope it is, because a lot of work has to be done before *Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko* is considered worthy of receiving the torch from *Gex: Enter the Gecko*.

While the framework for some awesome levels is in place, they're lacking in a few categories: enemies (and AI), items, collision detection... in other words, gameplay. Another shocking no-show thus far is the speech. What is Gex without a voice? ...there's certainly nothing funny about that, and so far the snide geckster is uncharacteristically silent. I'm sure by the time the final *G3* comes knocking, he'll be back to his old, snappy self (maybe he just had a bad rev)... nothing a good night's sleep and some hard work by Crystal can't get rid of.

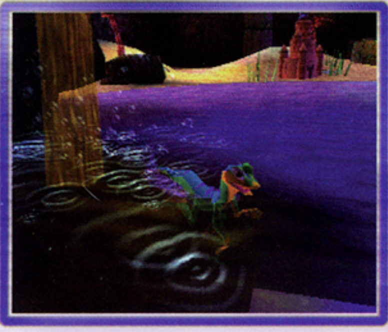
If you thought *G2*'s levels were creative, wait-'ll you get a load of these theme worlds: Alpine, Egyptian, Ghost Town, Pirates, World War, Wrestling, Mobster, Fairy Tale, Mecha Gex, and a Sherlock Holmes mystery. Each of those levels features Gex decked out in a different outfit, unique to the world's theme. Roman Gex is crowned with a laurel leaf and sports a toga. Swashbuckling Gex has a pegleg, eyepatch, captain's hat, hook for a hand, and a pirate tunic.

Since the game engine is the same as the last *Gex*, *G3* looks an awful lot like its predecessor; but thankfully there's been additions to the gameplay department, so you're not just buying an expansion pack. For starters, there's now 'vehicles' to ride in the bonus levels — a crocodile, snowboard, burro... even a tank, which attacks! *Battletanx*... or *Gex*? I'll take the funny guy any day! Secondly, there's new play mechanics such as firing cannons and pushing objects a la *Tomb Raider*.

Sure, there's polygon dropout, Z-buffering issues, poor collision detection, almost no AI, and camera issues... If *Gex 3* gets patched up before release, there should be plenty to smile about for Crystal this quarter. **E**

Steve Jobs, I got yer G3 right here!







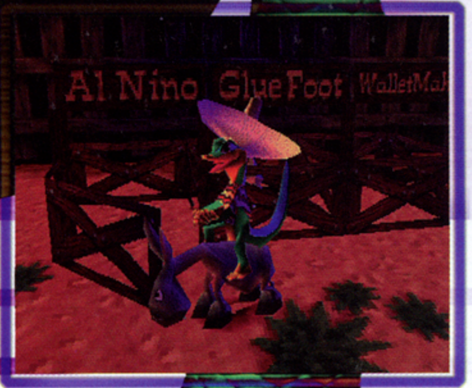




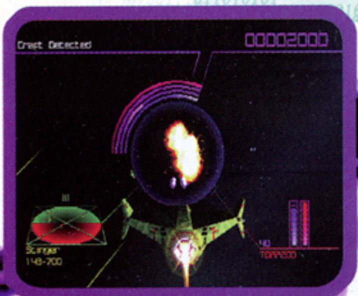















Blast Radius

Uhh, ECM, why do want me to review *Colony Wars*? Didn't we already... oh wait, this is *Blast Radius*, my fault. It's just... well, they both look pretty similar and what do you know, they're both made by Psygnosis! So who said game companies are in the business of making original products? I mean college tuition and braces don't just pay for themselves. Anyhow, if you're familiar at all with either *Colony Wars* 1 or 2, then by no means continue reading this review... simply replace the name *Colony Wars* with *Blast Radius* and there you have it... a new title for an old game.

OK, so perhaps I'm being a little unfair to *BR*. There are new spacecraft to choose from, and the stages... well they look like they were originally designed for *CW* but were simply held back for this unofficial sequel. Thankfully, *BR* is a fairly good-looking game. Unfortunately though, hi-res graphics running at a constant 60 fps doesn't constitute a sure-fire success... or does it? I know more than a few industry execs who'd openly disagree with me.



Now, I don't know about you, but I expect a game's intro to somewhat clue me in as to what the hell is going on. I mean CD games are the ultimate medium for narration and that's why I just can't understand why *Blast Radius* is missing an opening story. Am I expected to just incorporate my favorite sci-fi plotline in place of an actual story?

The only major difference I noticed between *CW* and *BR* is how you view the action. For example, in *Blast Radius*, instead of being able to openly switch between cockpit view and rear view at will, you now have to hit start to make these adjustments. Been there, done that... now if it's not too much trouble... give me something new! True, the game is linkable. But please tell me Psygnosis doesn't expect gamers to shell out fifty or so bucks just to play two-player *BR*.




For gamers who've never played *Colony Wars* and who enjoy a bit of space combat, then I'd certainly recommend popping out your trusty Blockbuster card and giving *Blast Radius* a whirl for a few days. And for everyone else... there's always volunteer work at your local Y, or gardening, or rearranging your sock drawer or... **F**

Viewpoint Score	Developer / Publisher	Players / Availability	
:79	Developer - Psygnosis Publisher - Psygnosis	1-2 Players Available Now	FURY: Blast Radius and Colony Wars... separated at birth?

T'ai-Fu™

Wrath of the Tiger

















Month-in, month-out, developers continue to pour salt into the many gameplay-deficient wounds on my body with graphically spectacular, gameplay-deficient titles. It seems that the publisher mentality takes one of two twisted routes: There's the "it's much easier to simply copy an existing concept, ramp up the graphics, toss it in a new box and dump it on the 'quantity over quality' PS market" approach (welcome to the nightmarish world of *Tomb Raider*), or the overly ambitious "let's re-invent the wheel" club (*Blasto* fits into this over-thought gang). On rare occasion, however, these two come together and create something special — something that is not fully of either school of thought. This odd, hybrid state of being has given birth to some tremendous games, the likes of which include *SkullMonkeys* (a flying leap forward for the venerable platformer), *Tiny Tank* (a re-defining of the tired 3rd person action/adventure game), and now *T'ai-Fu*.

To sum up *T'ai-Fu* in a sentence, I'll borrow DreamWorks Interactive's own in-house description: "A kung fu tiger fighting his way through ancient China." Now while that may sound kinda cheesy, I think it's pretty cool in a Kung-Fu Theater sort of way — think Enter the Tiger. T'ai, the heroic hero of our tale (<ouch>), is the last surviving member of the Tiger Clan. The TC was wiped out some years ago by the evil machinations of the Dragon and his reptilian cronies from the snake clan. Now T'ai's on a quest for vengeance and nothing is gonna stand in the way of a tiger out for a little payback.

The actual gameplay in T'ai-Fu can be best described as *Streets of Rage* meets *Brutal*. Remember *Brutal*? The one-on-one fighter from GameTek with numerous anthropomorphic pugilists engaged in donnybrooks across locales in ancient China? Essentially, *T'ai-Fu* is a



ECM: Tony says it's grrrreeeaaat!! | Developer - DreamWorks Interactive | Publisher - Activision | 1 Player | Available Now | Viewpoint Score :90

SoR-esque trek through ancient China with *Brutal*'s learn-as-you-play game mechanics. As in *Brutal*, progression through the game will reward you with martial arts styles unique to each animal clan. The monkeys bequeath monkey-style, characterized by an over-the-top, elastic style replete with rolls and monkey cries. As with SoR, gameplay is simple but painfully addictive. One word of warning, however: It's necessary to play at least a few levels before gaining the more interesting fighting styles (wow, gameplay that rewards the tenacious player... madness).

Graphically, while *T'ai-Fu* doesn't approach the manic levels of games like *Spyro* and *Metal Gear Solid*, it has effective, if somewhat simple, characters. Not to say the game doesn't look nice, it's just that it could use a boost in the color department. However, the environs are all solidly rendered with no seams and the game flows effortlessly. Oh, and as a nice side-note, I got a quick peek at what the game *could* look like if it makes its way to Dreamcast (one look at the DC character models, and...<ack>).

SO there you have it: the latest game from DreamWorks. Certainly took them long enough to put together a good game (*Trespasser* and *The Lost World* with their multi-million dollar pedigrees should be ashamed of themselves). Here's to hoping for some more "kung-fu fighting" in the not so distant, Dreamcast ready, future. **ECM**













Five Questions with Lyle Hall, Producer of T'ai-Fu, DreamWorks Interactive:

GF: With *T'ai Fu*, Dreamworks finally has its first in-house hit (*SkullMonkeys* was produced by The Neverhood so it doesn't count). Why has it taken a company of this caliber so long to produce a quality game by one of its in-house teams?

LH: Certainly everyone has incredibly high expectations of DreamWorks Interactive, and our products will continue to improve with every release. *T'ai Fu* is the first original title from DreamWorks Interactive, and although each product faces its own challenges during development, we had a special opportunity with *T'ai Fu* to create something from scratch that pulled from the team's passion and vision for kick-ass, kung-fu action.

GF: Why do *T'ai Fu* on PlayStation and not N64?

LH: With the technical and creative experience we acquired with the *Lost World* game on PlayStation, it only made sense to continue our efforts on the PlayStation and use the experience and technology to give *T'ai Fu* a leg up in development.

GF: Any plans to expand the *T'ai Fu* franchise to encompass other platforms (DC, N64, PC), or other media (animation, toys, etc.)?

LH: There are a number of departments within the DreamWorks' SKG studio that share our passion for *T'ai Fu* and are making efforts to get *T'ai* out there in the celluloid and die-cast world of cartoons and action figures.

GF: Has it been tough trying to differentiate *T'ai Fu* from the mass of "me-too" titles that swamp the PlayStation? In your eyes, what sets it apart from the PS pack?

LH: We set out from the concept creation of *T'ai Fu* to create a character and gameplay that are something fun-filled and different. *T'ai Fu* uniquely mixes elements of character action and fighting genres into a free-roaming, kung fu adventure. It sets itself apart from the pack by offering the player new, distant lands to explore mysterious, ancient clans to meet and kick-ass kung-fu styles to master and unleash furious combos upon.

GF: Spielberg, Katzenberg, or Geffen?

LH: Spielberg, baby! No one else could do the *T'ai Fu* movie justice.



COMING SOON



Gran Turismo 2 (Sony)

Gran Turismo, the racing game that proved Americans love very fast cars, is getting a sequel... need we say more?



Quake 2 (Activision)

Can the PS version compete with the N64, let alone the PC monster? We'll soon see!



Need For Speed: High Stakes (EA)

The series that keeps getting better every time around goes for broke... the stakes are high next issue!



Jojo's Venture (Capcom)

After the better-than-arcade *Alpha 3*, our hopes for *Jojo's* have gone up exponentially. See for yourself!



Bust-A-Groove 2 (989 Studios)

New characters, backgrounds, and songs... sounds like a sequel to me!



Croc 2 (Fox Interactive)

Finally, the *Croc* sequel approaches. Get ready to rock with *Croc* this summer. Ker-splat!



Dueling personalities and multiple dead-endings lead you through an all-new "goryline" of thrills-and-chills. Terror reigns you in and horror holds you down, as you let out a blood-curdling scream against the insane pain that has become the bane of your existence. Also, with vibration function compatibility, nail-biting becomes almost impossible, as the shaking of your hands is equaled only to the shaking in your boots. So, you are cordially invited into a world where death comes unnaturally...and often.

The horrifying sequel to the original Clock Tower

- Multiple enemies and a main character plagued by split personalities
- Vibration function compatible



- 13 different endings
- Great sound & graphics
- Fast-paced storyline and more strategy

PlayStation

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GameFan Sports



Hello my fellow buckaroos, it is I, the Video Cowboy, and I have the helm for this month's *GameFan Sports* intro. We have a jam-packed issue full of tons of new games that are coming your way.

Even though the NBA season is in full swing, we have to report the very first gaming casualty of this strike year. *NBA ShootOut '99*, from 989 Studios, has been cancelled due to quality issues according to a studio spokesperson. Even though they had extra time to get the game ready, they apparently couldn't get it together in the end. However, they have assured us that they will be doing an *NBA ShootOut 2000* title. So fans of *ShootOut* will have to wait, and that's a shame because that franchise was getting better and better with every installment.

Inside this issue we take to the interactive ice with a 32-bit *Blades of Steel '99* from Konami. This game is one that will have legs for quite some time. It isn't an intense hockey simulation, but it captures the essence of the grand old game (if you ignore the speed problem).

The fighting isn't quite as good as it was in the old, 2D 8-bit classic, but it has a number of other interesting features that make this game worth a trip to the rental store.

I myself am definitely going to buy this game and add it to my N64 hockey collection [El Niño's note: right next to his *Virtual Makeover* game that he loves so much]. Turning to racing, *Gran Turismo 2* is expected to be released in Japan this summer, and the game will find its way onto store shelves here by fall. Look to see pics of this behemoth in a coming issue.

Hasbro Interactive has just signed a deal with NASCAR as the days of exclusivity for EA Sports on consoles and Sierra Sports on the PC are now over. Watch for multiple NASCAR products for the PlayStation, Nintendo 64, and Dreamcast this fall.

Speaking of NASCAR, I am packing my saddle-bags right now and heading down to Daytona to check out this year's running of the Daytona 500. El Niño is steamed, as he is a NASCAR fan [El Niño's note: I also went to college nearby and would have loved to go back to my fraternity house to visit]. But I will help him get hooked up next year [El Niño: Grrrrr....].

I know I will be in the minority, but I plan on cheering for Jeff Gordon. Till next month, my fellow buckaroos.... [El Niño's note: Didn't ECM put a moratorium on that "buckaroos" stuff?] **—Video Cowboy**



Hockey, hockey, hockey! Oh how I love hockey. I love hockey fights, too, although I prefer old-time finesse to gooning (unless my team is losing, at which point I want blood). *Blades of Steel* was known, in the 8-bit days, as the fighting hockey game. In this updated version, pugilism takes a back seat, but remains a enjoyable distraction in this unremarkable hockey sim.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	7	6	6	8	74



Blades of Steel
Nintendo 64
Konami Sports



Konami has transformed their eight-bit classic and done a good job of recreating the *Blades of Steel* experience on the N64. The fighting could have been done better, but the passing, shooting and one-timers add to an incredible arcade NHL hockey experience. The graphics flicker a bit, but skate down the ice and bulge the twine and you will forget all about it. This game has what it takes to compete.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	9	8	8	8	83



The N64 needed a *Triple Play* title and it got a doozy. Great graphics, impressive sound and some meaty gameplay make this an instant contender for best baseball sim on the console. After two lackluster years, this franchise has gotten a breath of renewed life, on the Nintendo 64. Now, if the PlayStation version could make as strong a showing, all will be right with the world.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	8	8	7	6	88



Triple Play 2000
Nintendo 64
Electronic Arts



EA Sports' first foray onto the Nintendo 64 baseball diamond is spectacular. Apart from a few frame rate problems I was very surprised by the awesome look and comfortable feel of this game. EA Canada has replicated a wonderful baseball experience on the N64. This game is the leader of Nintendo 64 baseball titles. The pitcher/batter interface is very well done.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	7	9	8	7	84



After two abysmal installments, it looks like Konami has successfully salvaged the series. The best graphics this series has seen, coupled with commentary and solid AI make *Bottom of the Ninth* a worthwhile trip to the rental store. The Scenario Mode adds much needed flair to the standard set of options and will give you quite a challenge.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	7	7	7	5	76



Bottom of the Ninth
Nintendo 64
Konami Sports



This franchise has come a long way in the last few years, but it still has a considerable way to go. Still, they have fixed the pitcher/batter interface and have a product that first time gamers should have fun playing, as it's easy to field and hit the ball. The frame rate is still a little bit of an issue, at times, like when trying to get your outfielder to a well hit ball. Not for hard core baseball fans.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
7	8	7	6	7	72



This is not a good golf game, plain and simple. The characters look silly, pasted on the backgrounds, the commentary offers nothing new or exciting, and the 4-point swing meter is a pain in the ass. Psygnosis did not need to jump into the golf genre any more than Wizard Works needed to continue to pump out hunting games. Avoid this title at all costs.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
6	5	4	4	3	47



Pro 18 World Tour Golf
PlayStation
Psygnosis



Challenging courses and above-average graphics make for a respectable golf game from Psygnosis PlayStation golfers will enjoy some of the courses in this game, including the infamous Coeur dí Alene country club. The floating green is very challenging and has been recreated perfectly. Dottie Pepper and the addition of Colin Montgomery and a few other PGA golfers was a nice touch.

G	C	P	M	O	Score
8	6	7	7	6	73

Blades of Steel








R Review

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami
Available: Spring
\# of Players: 1-4

Now here's a game that we needed. One of the more popular 'games from systems past,' *Blades of Steel* gave players something that *Nintendo Hockey* really didn't supply: unabashed, raw violence. Sure, a prolonged tussle could result in a bench-clearer in the latter, but that paled in comparison to the fisticuffs that highlighted *Blades*. Oh, those were the days... take it away, Edith.

We've had to wait two years and suffer through what seemed like countless Midway hockey sims to get here, but now N64 owners can enjoy some more competent hockey. We'll avoid placing *Blades* in the same category as *NHL 99* because, quite frankly, it is nowhere near as good. It does, however, far outclass any other hockey sim on the system.

Outfitted with a NHL license, some pretty graphics and sound, and a full set of teeth, *Blades* has come a long way since its days on the NES. Some may be disappointed to discover that fighting isn't as prevalent, but haven't we all grown up just a bit? ..well, maybe not, but still, how could they have gotten the licensing if it was a goon-fest?

The fights may be fewer and far between, but they sure are a sight to behold. The mechanics of the brawl are much more complex than other hockey titles, making the contest a test of skill. Unfortunately, there isn't any real incentive to win, and the lack of concussions and contusions will leave violence mongers (and Don Cherry) wanting more.

The AI is competent, highlighted by some heads-up goaltenders (something that is sorely lacking in *NHL 99*) and the team stats and breakdowns are presented in a refreshing manner. Unfortunately, the game's speed is unbelievably slow and the goal scoring is questionable, which makes for a hockey game that, while enjoyable, is still lacking. **EN**

In The Zone '99






P Preview

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami
Available: Now
\# of Players: 1-8

I don't know how I feel about having a country whose national team can't beat my local YMCA team developing a basketball title, but I digress... *NBA In the Zone '99* manages to salvage this franchise from the sewer.

While the N64 *In the Zone* still manages to wow us with its awfulness, the PlayStation version can hang its head high, proving that there *is* life after '98 for Konami Sports titles. The timing couldn't be better either, with the no-show of *NBA ShootOut '99* and no other pro hoops sims to contend with.

In my preview I mentioned that while *In the Zone '99* had some nice graphics, control, and game sounds, the true test would come when I played it for an extensive period of time. While I did find some aspects less impressive than I had hoped, I was surprised at how well it ended up controlling and the brisk pace of the game's tempo. As far as realism, the players move well, thanks to some superb mo-cap, but the AI is very questionable. Point guards won't pass to the open center under the basket, and it is easy to trap a player in the paint for a 3 second violation.

Although most games contain a 3-point shootout now, *In the Zone* has gone one better and added a slam dunk contest. Unfortunately, it isn't as good as it sounds. The dunks are not freestyle — you have to quickly memorize a series of button commands and then successfully string them together before you even start your dunk... boring. The dunks do look cool though...

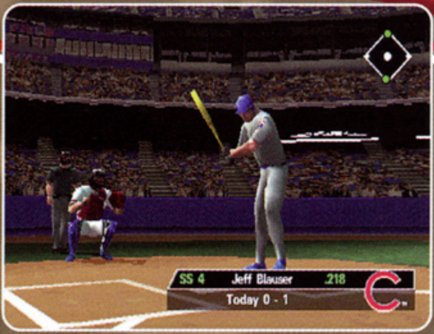
Other smaller aspects of the game hover around the average mark, either dipping slightly above (the foul AI, which adds a bit of flavor) or below (the free throw mechanism). After playing, it is clear this is no *Live*, but Konami should be satisfied in knowing that their title plays a strong second fiddle. One final note, it would have been cool if developers had added a scenario mode, like in *Bottom Of the Ninth*. **EN**

GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS

Triple Play 2000

PlayStation **P** Preview

Developer: EA · Publisher: EA · Available: Opening Day · # of Players: 1-2



It's about time this franchise got back in the game. Although many of the bells and whistles, that traditionally accompany this franchise have been getting more and more garish, important areas had begun to slip; namely the graphics and gameplay. I am happy to report, however, that the problem has been solved– at least for awhile.

Triple Play 2000 is a return to old form, not only boasting a superior knowledge of the game and deep stat tracking, but a solid engine, tight control and some sleek graphics. Even though this is only a preview copy, it is clear that strides have been made and the problems which have plagued past versions have been addressed.

The biggest change is in the engine. No longer are the graphics and scrolling choppy and slow;, thanks to a higher framerate. Now, the game moves faster and the action is a s smooth as silk.

Graphic enhancements include a better player with more polygons and the addition of animated facial expressions, on the players (think NBA Live 99). There are also more unique batting and pitching stances to better identify your favorite player by (unless that player happens to be some no-name; or the whole Expos squad, for that matter).

The commentary is still the industry leader and an improved, dynamic camera makes play much more exciting.

The biggest feature addition is the Career Mode. Draft your own team and then manage them through multiple seasons, utilizing a point cap and trading bank points.

Triple Play 2000 looks to be a return to top form, for this franchise. Opening day will be very exciting, this year. **EN**







Triple Play 2000

Nintendo 64 **R** Review

Developer: Trey Arch · Publisher: EA · Available: Opening Day · # of Players: 1-2



It's not that the *Triple Play* franchise was getting worse, but they were definitely stuck in a holding pattern. While the AI and commentary were getting better, the graphics seemed to falter, losing frames and producing choppy scrolling. While these problems still plague the PlayStation version (although it's still early), the N64 *Triple Play 2000* suffers nary a bit.

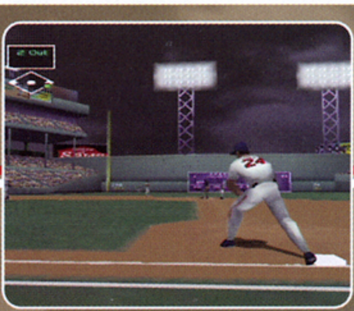
In its 64-bit debut, *TP2000* makes a strong showing and should give the veteran *All-Star Baseball* and *Griffey* some serious trouble. Not even this editor can find much to complain about.

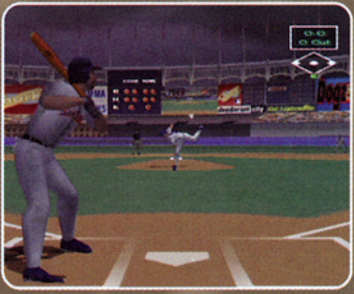
O.K., so it isn't as pretty to look at as *All-Star*, and the stat overlays are a bit agitating on the eyes (update your fonts, guys), but it trounces *Bottom of the Ninth* and *Piazza*. The texture-mapping is good, colors lush, and motion capture beautiful. The crowd is still an unsightly smudge of checkers, but I digress... I'll spend more time gawking at the facial animations!

Most impressive is the engine, which has the game buzzing along at a nice clip. The speed of the action is faster than most of the competition, which makes for a more exciting game. But it can wreak havoc on unskilled fielders (you try tracking down a rope to the corner, and you'll know what I'm talking about).

Once again, the AI is stellar and the stats —deep as the ocean blue. Unfortunately, the game takes up a lot of memory on your pack, so you'd better have another one handy. The commentary is impressive too, considering the constraints of N64 sound. Don't expect the audio to be as good as its PlayStation counterpart, but expect an uncharacteristically good play-by-play. Also noteworthy is the music soundtrack that fills the lulls between action.

Triple Play 2000 was a much needed addition to the N64 library. Now the baseball wars will *really* heat up. **EN**



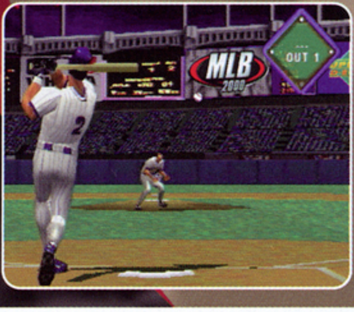




Major League Baseball 2000









PlayStation | P Preview | Developer: 989 Studios | Publisher: 989 Studios | Available: Spring | # of Players: 1-2

The good news is that 989 Studios didn't cancel *this* game. *MLB 2000* tries to compete with the likes of *Triple Play 2000* and *Baseball 2000* (formerly known as *VR Baseball*) for top slot. They needed to make some serious improvements on last year's opus to make it competitive, and it looks as though they may have done so.

MLB '99 was a disappointment. The AI was questionable, the options were lacking and the commentary was about as accurate as one of Dionne Warwick's Psychic Friends. You'd never know it by the review I wrote, though, since these shortcomings managed to elude me until after writing it. Imagine my outrage at discovering, about ten games into my *MLB 99* season, that I had made a horrible mistake. Never again...

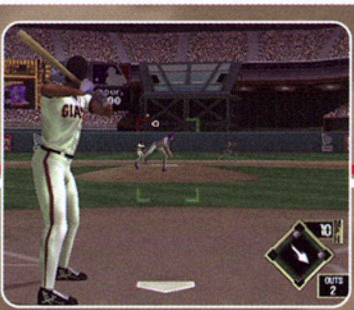
This year expect enhancements in every area, from graphics and sound to AI and gameplay. Character models have been given a higher polygon count and some better texture mapping. Also new are the real-life visages of the players, allowing you to discern each player by face, as well as number. The number of animations has also been upped to include such impressive moves as 360 twirl-throws and homer celebrations (more McGwire and Sosa for those of you who didn't get enough of it all last year).

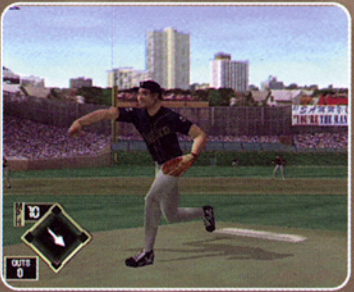
Adding his voice talents to the booth is ESPN baseball analyst, Dave Campbell. It will be quite impressive to here both he and Scully calling the plays; if only they could get them right in this version.

In an attempt to out-stat *Triple Play*, *MLB 2000* will break down the numbers into every category you'd ever want to see (and some you wouldn't). There are RBI in night games, fielding percentages on turf, BA against left handed pitchers, etc... True stat geeks will salivate for this.

MLB 2000 should fare well with this year's stiff competition. It is a good time for baseball gamers... **EN**

All-Star Baseball 2000









Nintendo 64 | P Preview | Developer: Iguana | Publisher: Acclaim | Available: Now | # of Players: 1-2

For this year's *All-Star Baseball*, they went to work early. Acclaim did their motion capture sessions in October of last year with minor league players, to make sure they would have the game ready to ship in April. They also listened to consumers and the gaming media and addressed some of the problems with last year's version.

Their spokesperson and poster boy for this year's game is Derek Jeter of the New York Yankees. Jeter is a huge gamer, and he helped Acclaim with the scouting reports for all of the American League pitchers. Last year, Acclaim used Larry Walker, MVP of the National League, and he gave them scouting reports for the National League pitchers. So they now have scouting reports on virtually all of the pitchers in the Major Leagues. Hmm... they probably should have got them both for the first game, don'tcha think?

This year Acclaim has added a 3D batting cursor, a three-dimensional square that appears and gives you complete bat control, allowing you to place the ball in play (assuming you're good enough) like the major leaguers do. They did this to avoid the problem that last year's title had — where you were just swinging away, hoping to get the ball in play or over the fence. Acclaim is hoping that this new feature will add to the depth and realism, while fixing the problem of the pitcher/batter interface.

The pitchers have a lot more options this year as well. Not only does each pitcher have the same repertoire of pitches that he had in the Majors, but now he has compete control over the change of speeds. A big plus.

This year's *All-Star* is Expansion Pak compatible, which will increase the game speed and allow for longer replays. The game is already in hi-res without the pack, so the visuals won't be enhanced. Still, *All-Star Baseball 2000* looks to be the baseball game to beat on the N64. **VC**

Bottom Of The Ninth '99

NINTENDO64

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami
Available: March
of Players: 1-2

R Review

This franchise has plummeted over the last two years. Like all Konami Sports series, *BOTN* had become a joke and it seemed as though there was nothing that could save it. Somebody managed to get it together, though, and save *BOTN '99* from plunging headlong into the abyss, to dwell there for eternity with titles such as *Jimmy Johnson Football* and the entire Jaguar library.

Cheap shots aside, I am pleased to say that *Bottom Of The Ninth '99* is a surprising baseball sim that almost manages to put the complete package together. I say this because, while *BOTN* plays well and features solid AI, it still manages to pull a Homer in the end. Before I rip them for these mental errors, let's go over what *BOTN '99* does right...

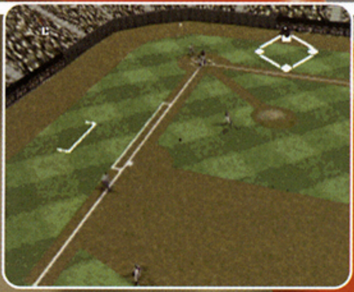
For the first time in this franchise's history, the marionette players have made a no-show. A higher poly count and some nice texture-mapping have made these Boys of Summer actually look like men, instead of rejects from *The Punch and Judy Show*. The mo-cap is on par with the competition (although not quite as extensive), and the frame rate is adequate.

One area that has been hard to knock this series for has always been the AI. While not on the level of *VR Baseball* or, to a lesser extent, *All-Star* and *Triple Play*, *BOTN* has a firm handle on the fundamentals. Runners especially, will make heads-up plays, and fielders won't do stupid things like make lost-cause throws in an attempt to get the lead runner out.

Now to the issues that knock *BOTN* out of contention. For starters, there is no MLB license; this is absolutely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. You know, if Konami had spent a little less on advertising a ringer like *Metal Gear Solid* and put some of that money toward the license, then I wouldn't have to look at Brand X baseball. Granted , the MLBPA license is present, but it's just not the same.

Visually, the colors look washed out and there is no player detail... bleech. Also needing a fixer-upper is the game's menu interface. They can be a pain to navigate, stats are a jumble, and sometimes there seems to be no method to the madness. Just subbing in a player can become a tedious affair...

Bottom Of the Ninth '99 is a solid baseball title that would be worth the purchase, if only there were no other titles available. As it stands, it still isn't up to par with the likes of *Griffey* and *All-Star Baseball*. **EN**



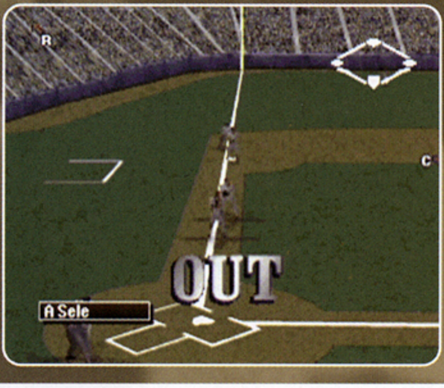












Monaco Grand Prix













PlayStation | P Preview | Developer: Ubi Soft | Publisher: Ubi Soft | Available: Spring | # of Players: 1-4

I was pretty rough on the N64 version of this game last issue. It needed major work and failed to excite me, even slightly. Well, the PlayStation version does little more to peak my interest, but at least it appears to play better.

Monaco Grand Prix has the standard racing compliment of 16 international tracks, 22 racing teams (hey look, it's some European guy I've never heard of! Where's Dale Jarret?) and six racing modes: Arcade, Championship, Time Trial, Free Run, Ghost and Single Race. Nothing new there.

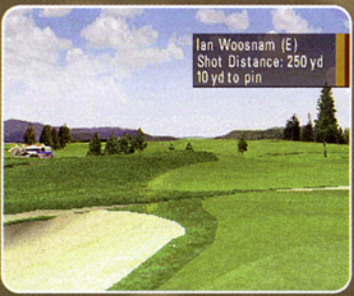
The game claims to utilize the most comprehensive car physics model on the PlayStation. This should result in some nice control and an impressive facsimile of Formula One racing.

Complimenting the realistic driving, Ubi Soft has also included varying weather, resulting road conditions, and all of the flags and consequences of an actual Grand Prix race.

Thankfully, the slowdown which made the N64 alpha excruciating to play is absent. The game still needs some work in the personality department, but judging from this version, the PlayStation rev outclasses its N64 counterpart. **EN**

Pro 18 World Tour Golf









PlayStation | R Review | Developer: Intelligent Games | Publisher: Psygnosis | Available: Now | # of Players: 1-4

I ravaged this game, when I first previewed it. To me, that version of *Pro 18* was nothing more than another sign that the Apocalypse was upon us. Luckily for Intelligent Games' ego, *Pro 18* has improved in the final version; just not enough to pull it out of the cellar.

In a genre as glutted as golf, success depends on the developers' ability to give the gamer something original or technically better. Whether it is better graphics, more courses or an innovative swing meter, something has to make us want to play. *Pro 18* contains none of these.

For starters, the swing meter that is implemented just plain sucks. Its four point power and accuracy system is a pain in the butt to use and offer the golfer little in vital information — like what the shot distance max is, for a particular club. I'm a good computer golfer (although my real-life skills blow) and I found myself still overshooting and under-putting way too much because of the constant guessing.

In the eyesore department, we have the golfers, themselves. While the courses are quite attractive, boasting lush coloring and fine detail, the golfers look ridiculous. They are nothing more than FMV characters transplanted (quite poorly, I might add) onto the background. >Blech<

A pitfall that so many golf titles get stuck in, and *Pro 18* is no exception, is the lack of courses. Sure there are three internationally recognized courses. One problem... there are only three! Enough with the licensing of real courses; double the number and make them generic. A well-designed fake course is just as cool as any licensed course.

The game's one saving grace is that the engine handles course generation very well. Comparable to *Hot Shots!* and *VR Golf*, the speed of the course generation cuts down on the wait time and results in a very smooth transition between camera angles.

Pro 18 is a far cry from the likes of *Hot Shots!*, or even the overrated *Tiger Woods*. An iffy venture, even as a rental. **EN**



EGGO: A HEARTY SQUARE MEAL (IN 4 PORTIONS)!

DEVELOPER - SQUARE
PUBLISHER - SQUARE

1 PLAYER
AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER









The Guch Strikes Back

You know, there's some days when it's hard to get out of bed... Then there's days when I just drive to work and play *Final Fantasy VIII*... <sigh of contentment> Life is good... Hironobu Sakaguchi's infamous *Final Fantasy* series gets another installment, and a U.S. version is headed your way between 3rd and 4th Qtr this year.

This preview is based off my adventures through the end of disc one (the game takes up four CDs) of the Japanese final. So in theory, the game could take a complete nose dive with discs 2-4 or it could get better the more you play (which is usually the case, judging from previous *Final Fantasy* games).

A Tale of Two Cities...

Story, a questionable part of *FF7*, has been weighed more heavily in *VIII*, and is better... so far. Again, I stress that I've only seen a quarter of the whole enchilada, but it goes a little something like this... The story involves two main characters: Squall Leonhart and Laguna Loire. Squall is a student at a military academy called Balamb Garden. Hoping to graduate top of his class so he can join the elite group of soldiers known as SeeD, Squall is joined by a host of other Balamb Garden folk such as Zell Dincht, Kistis Triumph (a teacher), and Seifer Almasy (his arch-rival, and source of that facial scar). At the graduation dance, Squall meets and falls in love with Rinoa Heartilly, daughter of General Heartilly, who commands the forces of Garbadia. A member of the Garbadia forces, Laguna is an aspiring journalist and student of Garbadia Garden, a rival military school of Balamb Garden. Laguna has his own unique party members and story, which interweaves with Squall's as the story progresses. Then there's this witch Edea, and... well, let's just say it gets messy from there. But you get the gist...

32-bit graphics never looked this good!

From what I've seen, the game lives up to the mountain of hype, at least visually. The graphics of new towns are as beautiful as the ones released to the world in Japanese magazines, and later scanned onto the Internet. Words don't do justice to the quality of Square's stunning pre-rendered backgrounds, incomparable when you look at everything else on 32-bit. One of the complaints about *FF8*'s backgrounds were that they were 'dead' because there was no movement, other than your polygonal character walking around.

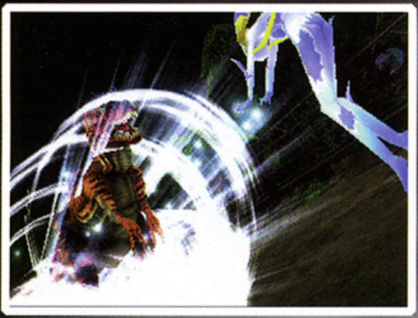




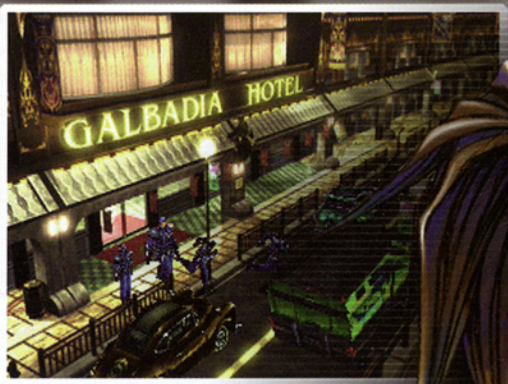














Well, that concern has been addressed this time round. Not every background is animated, but towns are now populated by random passersby. Plus, there's the occasional animated gear that rotates or street lamp which radiates a lighting effect. But you can no longer say that the backgrounds are completely lifeless. While *FF8*'s towns aren't bursting at the seams, teeming with life, it's a definite step in the right direction. And who knows what Square EA will do with the game by the time the U.S. final is released. Maybe more ambient effects can be added before it ships.

A Question of Character...

But backgrounds are only half of it. The characters in *Final Fantasy VIII* are a lot different from what fans of the series are accustomed. *FF8*'s have a more 'Westernized look;' super-deformed characters are a thing of the past. Also scrapped in *FF8* are much of the fantasy elements of lore. Character classes such as white/black magic users, monks, and paladins are suspiciously absent. While many will mourn the loss of the different character classes, *FF8*'s visual makeover delivers a much more realistic world. No longer are super-deformed characters magically growing to full-size in CG sequences, only to return to that odd, stocky, Dangohead-like status, post-FMV. Thankfully, it makes for much better continuity between the FMV and the normal scenes.

If you're looking for dragons, dragoons, knights, and ninjas, you'd best look elsewhere... because *FF8* is not going to satisfy your cravings. All the people/characters in this game are realistic... If you ran into Squall on the street, you wouldn't be completely shocked (doesn't he look like the lead singer of the Goo Goo Dolls?). But if you ran into Barret (with a machine gun for a hand) or a talking dog named Red XIII, you'd best check yourself into an insane asylum (or come work at *GameFan* and fit right in!).

Technology is also a lot more modern. Cars, trains, and boats are staple items of the world of *FF8*. While the Chocobo is still available for a quick spin around the world, Rent-a-Cars are literally more efficient (since a car won't run away once you get off). Just don't run out of gas in the



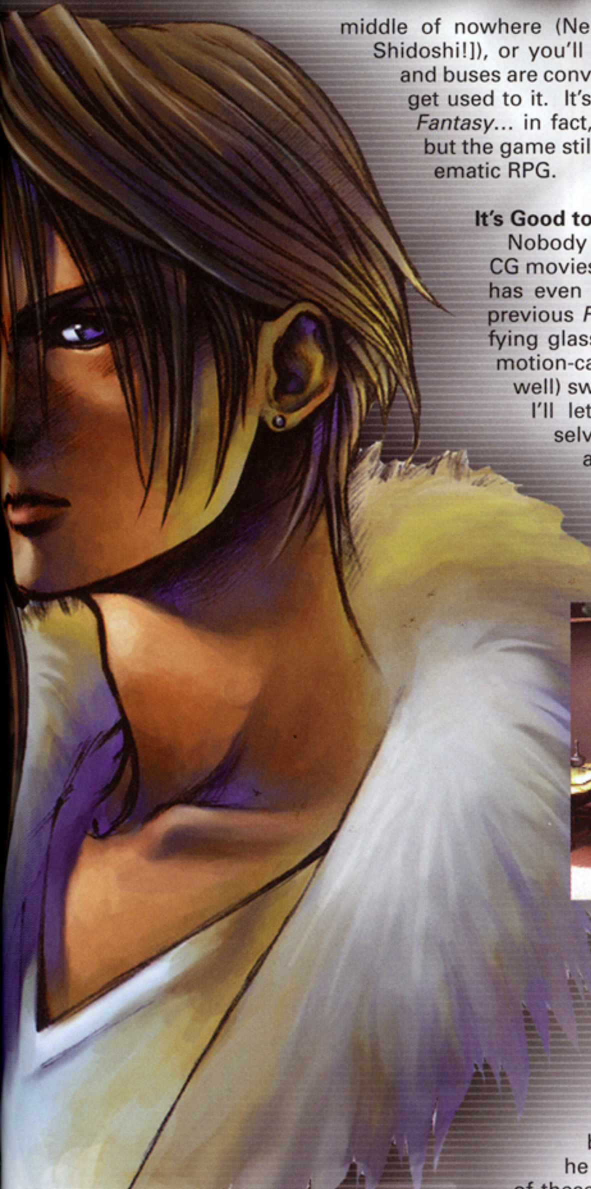








FINAL FANTASY VIII



middle of nowhere (Nebraska for instance [oops, sorry Shidoshi!]), or you'll be walking back to town. Trains and buses are convenient means of transportation, so get used to it. It's not your everyday world *of Final Fantasy*... in fact, there's very little Fantasy in *VIII*, but the game still plays like a signature Square cinematic RPG.

It's Good to be the King (of CG).

Nobody will question Square's ability to do CG movies. They're the best in the biz, and *VIII* has even more, better quality FMV than the previous *Final Fantasy*. Whip out that magnifying glass and look at the CG intro and that motion-captured (something new to *VIII* as well) sword fight in that miniature film strip. I'll let the screenshots speak for themselves, because I could go on and on about this stuff. Sure it's not exactly gameplay, but a nice, long FMV cut-scene is a welcome reward for playing through a long sequence.





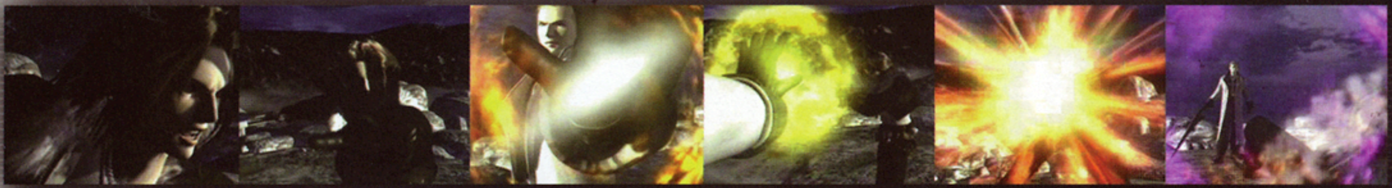


Another area where Square is leading the way is mixing polygon characters with moving CG sequences. This was first done briefly in *VII*, when a super-deformed, polygonal Cloud was walking on a round CG elevator. Well, *FF8* takes that idea and goes crazy with it. Polygon characters run out of a CG boat as it crashes onto the shore in the game's demo (which came with *Brave Fencer Musashi*); you control characters on the roof of a moving train; and there's one sequence at the end of the first disc where a CG Squall drives a CG car, slams on the brakes, jumps out and lands as a polygon character on a CG background, then he hops into the next scene and returns to CG again. How crazy is that? Most of these transitions are seamless and have to be seen to be believed. If you think about it, this could be the future of gaming. When you look at games like *Shen Mue* on the DC, dreams of a completely controllable CG game are becoming more and more a reality. Heck, Square's CG is so good that they've started work on a completely CG movie, which is due out in the year 2001.



Music: To Tactics or Not To Tactics

One of the biggest complaints people had with *FF7* was that the music was poor compared to *FF2* and *III*, which were 16-bit no less. Well, the aural assault in *VIII* still needs a little work, from what I've heard so far. Fortunately, *VIII*'s music doesn't sound as Midi-ish as *VII*'s did, but overall, *VIII* isn't measuring up to *Final Fantasy* standards.

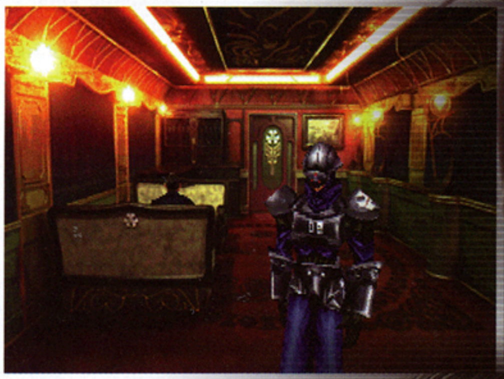










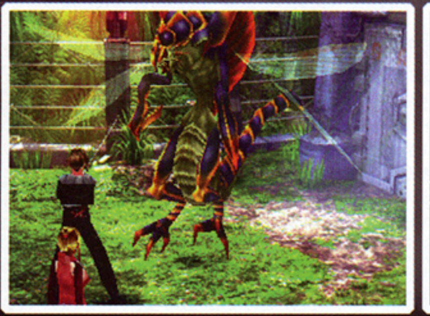


A single disc into *FF8*, sounds of that caliber are glaringly absent. Edea's parade-ish theme (complete with ex-members of the Sephiroth choir) is excellent, but the number of songs worthy of the *Final Fantasy* name in *VIII* are uncharacteristically absent. In other words, the music is disappointing so far. Maybe Square's rushing Nobuo, or maybe he's just got bad luck with the number 32... Whatever it is, something's missing. Course, I could pop in disc 2 right now and have my socks blown off... At this point, however, I wouldn't recommend buying the soundtrack.

You want an example of what I'm talking about? Pop your copy of *Final Fantasy Tactics* into your 32-bit poly pusher and be amazed. Bear witness to the majestic symphonies which Square is capable of producing... but which are lacking in *VII* and *VIII*. Even worse, stick in *Final Fantasy II* or *III* and cry your heart out.

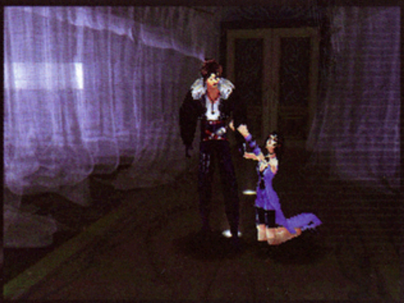
Will It Ever End?

This is just part one of *GameFan's Final Fantasy VIII* blowout. We'll be back next month with more ravings about everyone's favorite RPG-makers, as I get a chance to play further into the game and bring you more *FF8* goodness. Now, if you'll 'scuse me, I got a game to play... Just know that this review is **far** from over.









"Squall, don't go! It's the end of Disc One!"

Here's Rinoa begging Squall not to go as he leaves for an impending battle. We all know what happened at the end of *FF7*'s Disc One. Square wouldn't pull the same thing of the finale of *FF8*'s first disc would they?





FINAL FANTASY VIII

ファイナルファンタジーVIII



"Triple Triad: The Gathering?"

Call me crazy, but I like *FF8*'s mini-game Triple Triad (a card game) more than most 32-bit puzzle games on console. Screw *Tetris*, forget about *Devil Dice* <gasp>, and put *down Bust-A-Move* for a second to check this out. I've logged so many of my *FF8* hours playing just Triple Triad that I've almost forgotten to play *FF8*.

You can play Triple Triad with most of the people in the world of *FF8*. When you walk up to a guy, instead of hitting "Circle" to talk, hit "Square" and you'll start a card duel.

More than half the NPCs in *FF8* are TT players, though not everyone's interested.

Here's how it works: Start off by choosing five cards from your collection with which to battle an opponent. The playing field is like tic-tac-toe, nine spots for nine cards. Some squares on the board have elements such as earth, wind, air, and fire on them. Every card has four numbers on it corresponding to each of the card's four sides (top, left, bottom, and right), and some of the cards have elements on them as well.







If you place a card on a spot and they both share the same element, all the card's numbers are given a bonus of +1. If you place a card on a square with an element, but you don't have that element, the card suffers a -1 penalty on all numbers.



When you place a card down, if the number on one side is higher than the matching number from a bordering enemy card, then you capture that card. In the example in the screenshots, the top middle Cactrot card has a "3" on the left side. If I place my handy caller spell Diablos in the top left spot, Diablos' "8" on the right is higher than Cactrot's "3" on the left, so the Cactrot card falls under my control. Of course, captured cards can be retaken, and it's possible to capture more than one card at a time. When you place a card down, don't worry about one of your numbers being lesser than a bordering card, since you can't lose a card when you place it down — only when your opponent drops a card, and flips it.

The strategy comes in when you look at what cards you've got to work with and you see what the enemy has up his sleeve. Do I drop my powerful Siren card now, or save it for later in hopes of capturing multiple cards? The strategy gets even deeper when combos come into play. If you can match numbers on opposite ends of the same card exactly with your opponent's cards, you'll flip both his cards **and** if those flipped cards overpower any neighboring cards, you take them too.







When the board is filled, the player who flipped over the most cards is declared the winner and gains the spoils of war: the opponent's cards. Sometimes you're rewarded one card of your choice, and sometimes you win all five. That's the beauty of the game — the rules and rewards are constantly changing depending who you play with and where in the world you play. Sometimes you don't see the cards your enemy has available; other times, the elements are turned off; in some areas, the five cards you play with are randomly chosen from your deck. Once you've acquired some new cards, you can go into the "Card" option from the main menu to view your collection.



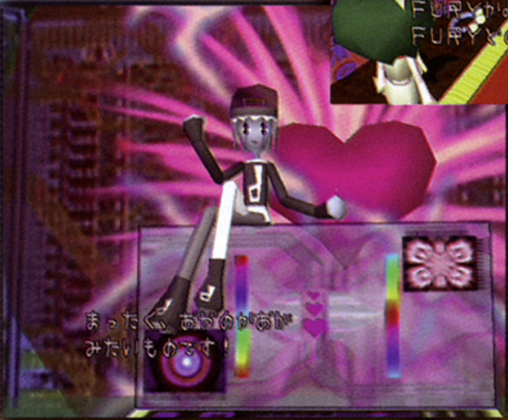
戦国TURB Sengoku Turb





As long as I've been playing video games, NEC has always played an integral role in the history of this industry. And while it's been some time since an NEC system has penetrated mainstream America (PC-FX? Yeah, right), you have to give it up to those guys for trying to remain involved in an industry that has been known to be less than forgiving to failed endeavors (3DO and Jaguar to name a few). So why then would a company with everything to prove (especially considering their involvement hardware-wise with the DC) release games that appear to only hurt the DC's credibility as the future of next-generation consoles?

While *Sengoku Turb* plays and looks much more like a game than NEC's other DC pile, *Seventh Cross* <brrr>, I can't help but sit back and wonder just what in the world went wrong with this game. First off, *ST* is an RPG that appears to have been crafted specifically for Japanese schoolgirls. I know what you're thinking, a lot of Japanese RPGs look like they've taken a walk through the produce section at your local supermarket, but this game takes all honors for the citrus award!





After only a few minutes of viewing the intro, you'll soon develop a whole new appreciation for vegetables, as the word "fruit" will bore itself painfully into your cerebral cortex. In fact, the only positive thing I can say about *Turb* is that it's colorful (after playing *Seventh Cross*, that's a pretty big improvement). The world your character inhabits appears to be a cross between *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Exorcist*... cutesy characters who speak in strange, creepy synthesized drivel (El Niño even feared Linda Blair was lurking in the shadows... waiting for retribution!).

The graphics in *Sengoku Turb*, as in *Seventh Cross*, do nothing to showcase the DC's graphic power. All the environments I encountered were extremely boring and about as inspiring as an episode of the *Teletubbies*... not that I've ever tuned in to that crappy show, but you get my drift, right? ...Right?! Also, the character animations redefine the word "stiff," as most inhabitants appear to skate along the ground, rather than take up the precious memory needed to animate any semblance of walking. Who needs motion capturing when you've got *Sengoku Turb* On Ice?



And so my fellow game fans, like many of you, I had high hopes for all the DC releases... but alas, those were the days when I also believed I was respected among the GF staff... [Staff's note: <snicker>] What a joke! Let's just pray that the insanity ends here, with NEC's double dose of gaming anesthesia... Zzzzzz. **F**









Fury: *Sengoku Turd* or *Sengoku Turb*. You decide.

Developer - NEC	1 Player	Viewpoint Score :61
Publisher - NEC	Available Now Japan	

model 3 in your living room...

SEGA RALLY 2

SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP









In Japan and most of Europe, rally car racing is a national event that's a celebrated sport, drawing in hordes of people and raking in millions of dollars through corporate sponsorship. The idea behind rally racing lays in a vehicle's ability to corner and maneuver through ridiculously sharp turns at a fairly high speed. And while rally cars might not possess the horsepower generally found in Stock or Indy cars, their ability to handle is nearly unparalleled. So when Sega decided to base an arcade game around this amazing racing class, it was a sure bet they'd do it up in grand style.

While most racing fans generally worshipped such racing games as *Daytona* or *Ridge Racer*, I always felt that *Sega Rally* was among the more realistic racers available. And when *Sega Rally* debuted on the Saturn, I was shocked at how close the developers came to perfectly porting a Model 2 game. But what about Model 3? Could the geniuses at Sega possibly manage another near-perfect port of a game that visually blew away the first *Sega Rally*? Powered by the Dreamcast... *Sega Rally 2* takes the checkered flag!

Visually, *Sega Rally 2* is a sight to behold. It almost looks better than the arcade version, as the edges look sharper and more defined, due to the DC's ability to generate higher quality, crisper textures. True, *Rally 2* does suffer from a bit of frame-rate drop... but I can't imagine that anyone would allow that small flaw to sway their opinion of this amazing game. The frame rate will fluctuate, at times, from a beautiful 60 down to and below 30 (generally on courses that have a long field of view into the screen). Yes, a constant 60 frames would have been nice, but remember this is only a first generation game — by the time *Daytona* skids into the starting grid, 60 fps should be standard equipment on the turbo-charged DC. If *Rally 2* doesn't manage to impress you with its visuals, then perhaps you should stick to playing *Mario Kart* or other games that just offer the barest in visual presentation.





As in the Saturn version, you are presented with the option to modify your car to best suit your needs. Everything from the suspension to your tire type to even the gender of your co-driver can be adjusted at will in the 10-year anniversary mode. Also, you can unlock new cars in this mode by beating each of the 10 available race series... one series for each year of the anniversary.

While the original stages are a blast to tear through, I was more than impressed at how the new tracks manage to keep the original flow of the game completely intact. Each of the new stages slightly resembles the original tracks but have been spiced up with unique weather and terrain conditions to challenge even the most experienced drivers.

At first, the play mechanics in *Rally 2* are a bit tough to adjust to, depending on the different terrain and weather conditions. Sliding around turns at high speeds without completely losing control of your vehicle isn't exactly an easy feat. First



Viewpoint Score :98 | Developer - Sega | Publisher - Sega | 1-2 Players | Available Now Japan | FURY: Skidding out of control never looked so good!

Easily the most impressive home racer available!

you have to find a car (I prefer the Subaru Impreza) that matches your particular racing style. Some cars are big on speed but are far too slippery in the cornering department. After a bit of play, though, you'll soon develop your own style when taking those turns at earth-scorching velocities (I prefer taking each corner with blind, "Look ma, no hands" enthusiasm — letting the hand of God personally guide me to safety).

The multi-player mode is really the only item about *Rally 2* that won't leave you gasping for air. First off, splitting the screen in half so you can race against friends is not the best way to go. If you want multi-player action, try networking *Rally 2*, but at all costs don't forego gorgeous full-screen racing to accommodate competitors... they are the enemy, remember this at all times. Also, multi-player suffers from serious amounts of draw-in, albeit smooth draw-in. Still, it just makes me cringe to see such a travesty on the Dreamcast (if *Pen Pen* can accomplish nearly flawless multi-player, so should *Rally*!).

What most people don't realize is that the cars available in *Sega Rally* are the exact same cars used in actual rally racing. Basically, a rally car uses the same exterior design that you'd see in a production car (e.g., a Toyota Celica) but everything under the hood, including chassis design, has been completely modified (too bad, or you'd see my Celica make an appearance in next year's rally cross!).



The sound effects in *Rally 2* are a mixture of actual engine samples as well as the classic lines you've come to expect from your co-driver... "sharp right hand turn" and "easy left maybe" ...maybe? Maybe?! Words like "maybe" are not exactly the best way to reassure a driver! Lastly, everyone's favorite "GAME OVER YEAHHH!" has managed to survive the jump to sequel city... where would *Sega Rally* be without it?

Easily though, I found the coolest features in *Rally 2* to be the replays and car profiles. If you thought *Gran Turismo*'s replays looked good, you'll find yourself in complete awe, watching the computer select the most impressive camera angles to compliment your recent rally endeavors (notice the brilliant reflections strewn across your windshield... unbelievable!).

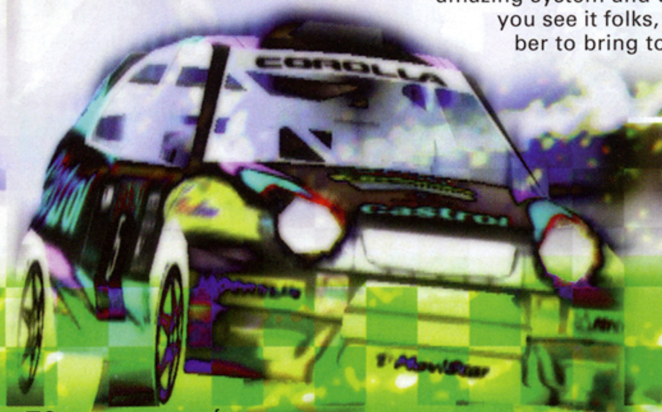








I realize people will inevitably dog the DC and somehow find a way to rip apart its first generation games. I also know that people (in fits of jealousy) act childish and react without really understanding what they're dealing with. The Dreamcast is truly an amazing system and *Sega Rally 2* is without a doubt a great game. Save your skepticism till you see it folks, and until then, feast on these juicy *Rally* shots I slaved over a hot grabber to bring to you (is that smoke coming from the PC?). Enjoy! **F**











The good, the bad, and the steering wheel...



While the concept behind a steering wheel for *Sega Rally 2* (or any other racer) makes perfect sense, the outcome usually results in a botched attempt to further the home arcade experience. Many companies, including Namco with both their Negcon and Jogcon and Sega with their own steering wheel for the Saturn, have fallen short of giving players a more realistic approach to controlling their favorite racing games. Still, it completely baffles me how Sega, at a time when they're re-establishing themselves as a force to be reckoned with, would allow such a terrible device as the DC steering wheel to be released! It controls like a blind and deaf chimpanzee had personally designed it to meet its own handicapped needs. A small tug to the left would always result in severe understeering, while any movements in the opposite direction would also wind up sending my rally car careening out of control. I realize I'm being pretty harsh on the DC wheel, but no matter how many times I attempted to use it, the end result would always be me throwing it against a wall and cursing myself for wasting my time on such a broken peripheral!







Microsoft Windows CE

Sega Rally 2 is the first Sega-developed Dreamcast game to utilize the Windows CE operating system. Included as part of DC dev kits, it allows relatively rapid ports of PC games to Sega's uber-console. In the case of *SR2* it allowed a quick move from Model 3 to DC. The slowdown can also be attributed to the fact that it takes more console horsepower to run a game through CE, rather than going "to the metal" and writing a game in the console's base language, Assembly (the trade-off, of course, being that it is much more difficult to write a game in Assembly and doing it in a deadline-intensive environment).





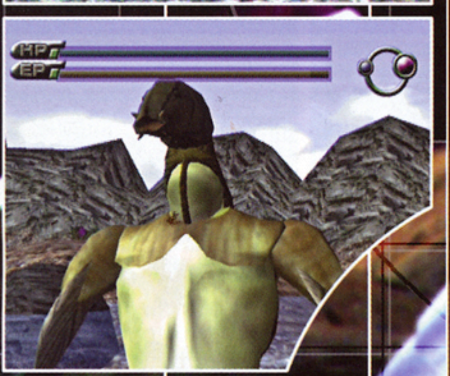
Seventh Cross



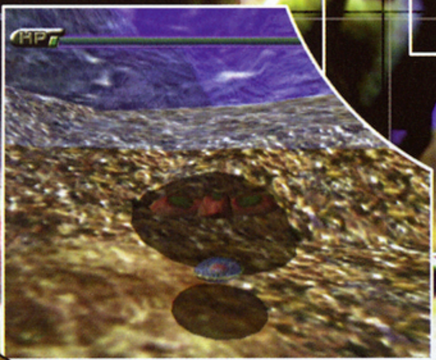












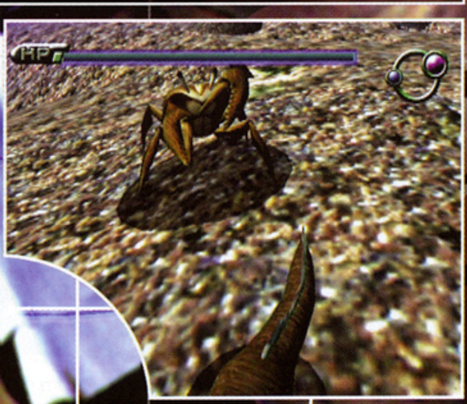
When a new console is released, I've always understood the thinking to be... good games sell a system. And, while I've been more than impressed with a handful of DC games thus far, I can't help but wonder why Sega has allowed such a poorly-crafted game as *Seventh Cross* to come out at such a fragile time. These are the days when Sega needs to be wowing audiences with their unbelievable titles like *Sonic* and *Rally2*, not frightening away potential buyers with product that resembles Bubba's wardrobe... bad, real bad!

Witness first hand the miracle of life. Watch in utter amazement as the forces of nature come together to create... <hold your breath>... a slug?! That's right folks, life wasn't always this pretty, and in *Seventh Cross* you'll learn just that as you begin the game as a simple amoeba in search of the life-giving energy that will eventually transform you into the guardian crusader!

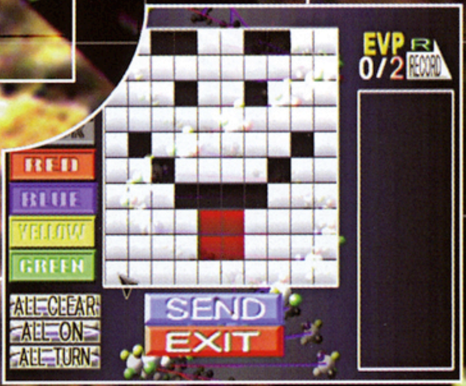
I'll admit, that at first the concept of *Seventh Cross* seemed extremely interesting to me. An RPG/biology experiment in which you battle enemies such as crabs and water bugs while manipulating DNA strands to evolve into a higher lifeform. But concepts alone don't make great games, and *SC* is no exception. The graphics are bland and will make you wonder if someone has played a joke on you and swapped your DC for a PC-FX. There is simply nothing going on in this game to warrant an appearance on the DC. It could easily have been programmed on PS hardware, and even then you'd still be shocked at how poor it looked! *SC* looks like it uses about six or seven of the 16 million or so colors at the DC's disposal.

And the music (which could have been *Seventh Cross'* lone saving grace) is, believe it or not... completely absent from the game. That's right, NEC, the fine makers of *SC*, have decided to let the game's visuals speak for themselves... (that was a joke). In fact, the best way to sum up the headache that is *SC* is a quote I heard from *GameFan's* newest internet freak and Dango-lookalike, Hi-Fi — "this turd looks more like a hardware demo than a game!".

While NEC might have years of experience designing both cutting-edge hardware and at times some great games (god knows its been some time), I think the powers that be over in Japan need to drastically rethink their going logic in software development for the DC... it's the ultimate next-gen console, people. Now cut out the nonsense and let's see *Legendary Axe DC*!! F







FURY: I didn't know the Discovery Channel made games!

Developer - NEC
Publisher - NEC

1 Players
Available Now Japan

Viewpoint Score :45









The break-out fighting game of last year was *Bloody Roar*. A monster engine and excellent play control were perfectly complimented by an array of pyrotechnic super-moves and some fantastic character design. This game bore only one flaw, and that was that it didn't have enough fighters.

I've been waiting a year for this sequel and must say that I am slightly disappointed. While the blazing speed, lush visuals, and first rate beasties make for a visual assault on the senses, something is missing.

ECM, Dango and I have played *Bloody Roar 2* and discussed this *je ne c'est quoi* that leaves *BR2* hollow, but we couldn't put our collective *GameFan* finger on it. *BR2* is vastly superior in many technical areas to most PlayStation games. The aforementioned graphics and speed are stunning. The poly counts in the characters have been beefed up; there is no break-up or slow-down in sight; and the addition of facial animation brings the monsters to life. Graphics aren't the problem...



The sound effects are explosive and the music, while still that cheesy Satriani-esque guitar, pulses with life nonetheless. No different than last year's game, and subsequently, not the problem either.

The issue of characters has been addressed with the addition of a new crew of shape-shifting pugilists, ranging from a giant bugman to a chameleon (who looks curiously similar to the Budwieser one). No, these combatants rule out depth as the source of the game's problems.



In the end we had to conclude that *Bloody Roar 2* suffers from a kind of problematic perfection, stemming from control that is too tight and a lack of "soul." I made the analogy that, while *Bloody Roar* was like a vintage vinyl record — full of body, *Bloody Roar 2* is like a CD — technically superior, but lacking the same winning personality.

By no means read this as a negative review, because it is not. When looking at the genre as a whole, *Bloody Roar 2* ranks near the top and definitely kept me riveted for hours on end. The familiar fighting mechanics, cool characters, and frenetic pace make this a real pulse pounder. Just be prepared to enjoy *BR2* a little less than the original. **EN**









Bloody Roar 2

-Bringer of the New Age-

Viewpoint Score: 89 | Developer - Raizing | Publisher - Hudson | 1-2 Players | Available Now Japan

El Niño: What this game needed was a Rob Zombie soundtrack.

大乱闘スマッシュブラザーズ

ALL-STAR SMASH BROS.

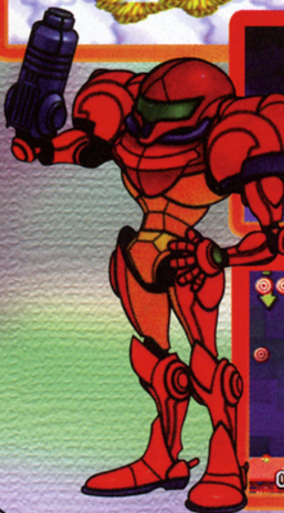












I won't even try to hide it, I'm a Nintendo fan. Big time. No, that doesn't quite cover it... I love the company and everything they do and it'll probably stay that way if they keep doing what they've been doing for over 20 years. Nintendo makes great games, and in the process makes me (and the rest of the world) very, very happy. Sure, they're cute, they're fuzzy and they never miss a chance to lay on the sugar, but who cares? They're the best at what they do, and what they do is make incredibly good games.

That said, let's proceed with the preview of a game that fans around the world have (literally) waited years for... *All-Star Smash Brothers*! Finally, after years of waiting and speculation Nintendo takes their greatest characters of all time and puts 'em all into one whopper of a game. Mario, Donkey Kong, Kirby, Link, Samus, Fox McCloud, Pikachu and Yoshi all headline *Smash Brothers*, as well as some not-surprising hidden characters: Captain Falcon from F-Zero, Purin from Pokemon, Ness from *Mother* (*Earthbound* here in the States) and the ever-forgotten Luigi. Co-developed by HAL Laboratories (the same guys who make the *Kirby* games), *SB* debuted at #1 in Japan and, between bouts of *Rally 2*, managed to stay there until the mighty *Final Fantasy VIII* was released (not bad for an N64 game in Japan!). This game's so cool that even the anti-cute gamer himself, ECM, bought a copy and insists on writing the full-blown American review (which will come, conveniently enough, next month... watch for it!).

Let's talk graphics. Everything is rendered in super-detailed, ultra colorful polys with absolutely NO break-up anywhere (then again, the guys ain't that big...!). But when you see how well animated they are (courtesy of some very impressive motion capture), and how fast everything is happening on-screen you'll be in a state of disbelief... really.

They're so good you'll swear the game's running in a high-res mode, especially when the fighters zoom up close to the screen (see for yourself by pausing the game to get a better look... amazing!).

But, amazingly enough, it's

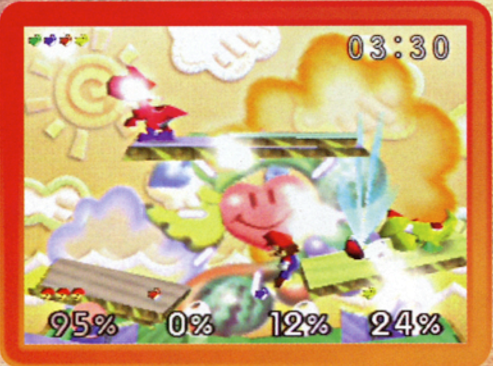








Developer - HAL/Nintendo | Publisher - Nintendo | 1-4 Players | Available Now Japan











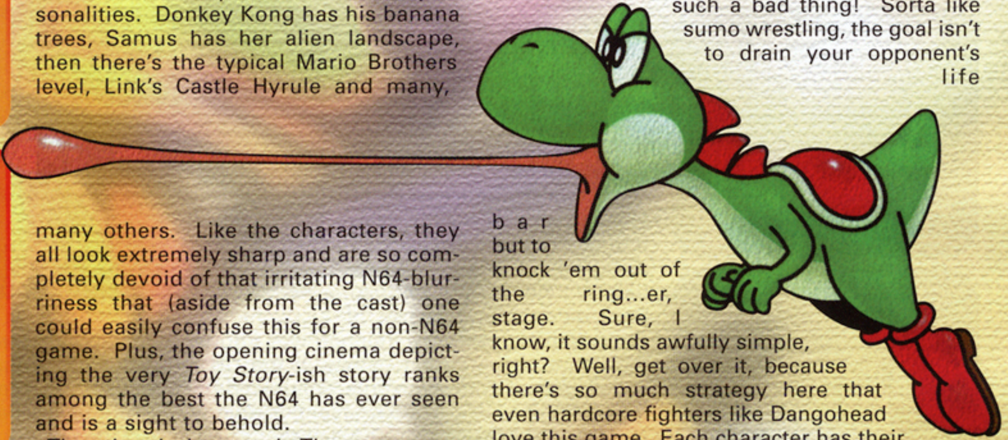






not the characters that look the most impressive... it's the backgrounds! That's right, the backgrounds. What makes these suckers so incredible is that (unlike most '3D; fighters) they're completely 2D!! Oh sure, they might be made of polygons like everything else, but all the action takes place on a very 2D level. Basically, the BGs are a bunch of platforms, designed specifically around their respective Nintendo personalities. Donkey Kong has his banana trees, Samus has her alien landscape, then there's the typical Mario Brothers level, Link's Castle Hyrule and many, many others. Like the characters, they all look extremely sharp and are so completely devoid of that irritating N64-blurriness that (aside from the cast) one could easily confuse this for a non-N64 game. Plus, the opening cinema depicting the very *Toy Story*-ish story ranks among the best the N64 has ever seen and is a sight to behold.

Then there's the sound. There are some of you out there that may scoff at the way Nintendo re-uses their sound effects and music tracks over and over... but I love it. Oh, you have no idea how much I love it when they go ahead and stick their classic tunes back in newer games. Thankfully, *Smash Brothers* is no exception, and every tune is a SNES tune... did I mention how much I love it when they do that? Castle Hyrule is accompanied by the ORIGINAL *Zelda* overworld theme, Samus's has her original NES tune and how could any game with Mario not have the classic ditty? Even the sound effects are the same (I haven't heard Mario's fireball sound in years...the memories!). It's all here, folks, and it's awesome.



Okay, so the game's got the graphics and the sound... how's it play? Well, it's pretty apparent that Nintendo was going for something just a wee bit different from the start, because this isn't exactly a 'hardcore' fighter... but that's not such a bad thing! Sorta like sumo wrestling, the goal isn't to drain your opponent's life bar but to knock 'em out of the ring...er, stage. Sure, I know, it sounds awfully simple, right? Well, get over it, because there's so much strategy here that even hardcore fighters like Dangohead love this game. Each character has their own patented attack methods (Mario's Flower-Power fireball, Link's Master Sword, Fox McCloud's gun), but attacks alone won't always help you out. Luckily, power-ups appear from time to time on the stages (Pokemon balls, Dr. Mario pills, crates) and you'll have to figure out the best way to use these suckers to your advantage. I'd go into details about these things, but I'll let ECM go to town next month with some in-depth strategies and (like I mentioned above) the full-blown review. But what I can say is that so far it's looking like 1999 already belongs to Nintendo. Anyone surprised? **ST**









THE GRAVEYARD

VALIS

THE LEGEND OF A FANTASM SOLDIER















You know what's funny about life? Sometimes one loves something not because it's a wonderful thing, but simply because, at the time, they know not of something better.

Back in the glory days of video gaming, a little system named the Genesis was bringing us video games like never before. Renovation, the US arm of the Japanese company Telenet, was known for not only releasing some of the cooler games in the US, but a lot of "anime-style" games with awesome anime-style "cinemas." Thus, my first taste of *Valis* came about, and I couldn't help but be hooked. Next, we fast forward to the day that I finally had the money to purchase the Turbo-CD. Games on CD? What a strange idea! But when I put in my first CD game, *Valis II*, I nearly died from amazement. The game was talking, and the animated cinemas were even more so animated and exciting!

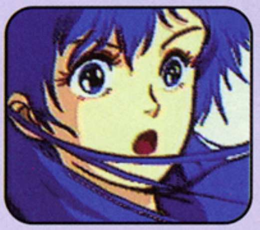
So my love for *Valis* only grew, and I ended up with all of the versions released in the US, which leads me back to my original point. My favorite of the games was, without question, *Valis I* for the Genesis. *Valis I* actually came out after the other games, and to me it was the best one of the group. It told the origins of the entire *Valis* series, how a young girl named Yuko Ahso was nothing more than an ordinary high school student who got caught up in the troubles of an alternate universe. While standing around after school one day, she finds out that a friend of hers, Reiko Kirishima, in mixed up in something far bigger than she understands. Reiko disappears, and next Yuko knows, she's being attacked by a huge demon. Suddenly, a mystical sword appears in her hands, which wards off the demon. A beautiful apparition then tells Yuko that she is the legendary soldier of Valis, and her task is to protect the Dream World from the evil tyrant Rogles. Of course, Yuko doesn't like the idea of what she's now part of,





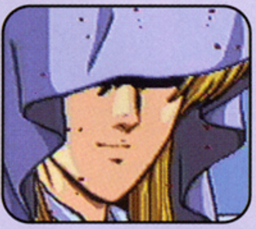


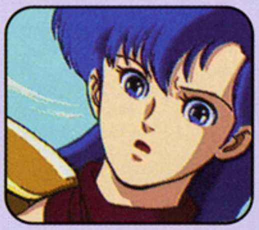
















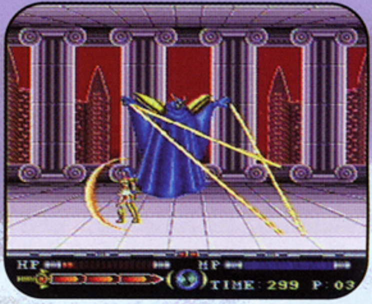










but her fate is sealed when she is forced to kill Reiko and a deep need for revenge is ignited inside of her. So anyhow, I went on in life holding the Genesis version of *Valis* as my favorite, thinking it was the best of the series.

The other night, when a friend of mine brought over some PC Engine games for me to play, one of them was the PCE-CD version of *Valis I*. I expected the game to be better in the way of cinemas, of course — due to it having that wonderful CD capacity thing — but I was not prepared for how much better the PCE-CD version was over the Genesis version. After a while, it almost seemed as if I was playing an entirely different game: The list of what was better over the Genesis version read like a list of the game's basic features. Control in this version is much tighter, your slide is performed the way it should be (by pressing down + jump instead of a separate button), and one of my biggest gripes about the Genesis version is not here: Your slide does (as it should) cause damage if you hit an enemy. The enemy sprites and designs, while still occasionally wacky, look far better than in the Genesis version. As well, the backgrounds have more variety and design composition to them, and are more of a sight to see. Yet another thing that I noticed was the ability to get weapons beyond your original weapon was greatly increased in the PCE-CD version, and there was a bigger variety of them. Of course, there are then the areas that were greatly improved by the CD. There are cinemas after each and every stage in this one, and even if I couldn't understand most of what was being said, having wonderfully acted Japanese voices to go along with them added so much. Throw in an absolutely stellar redbook audio soundtrack, and you've got my new favorite *Valis* title by a long shot.



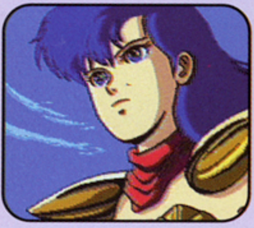


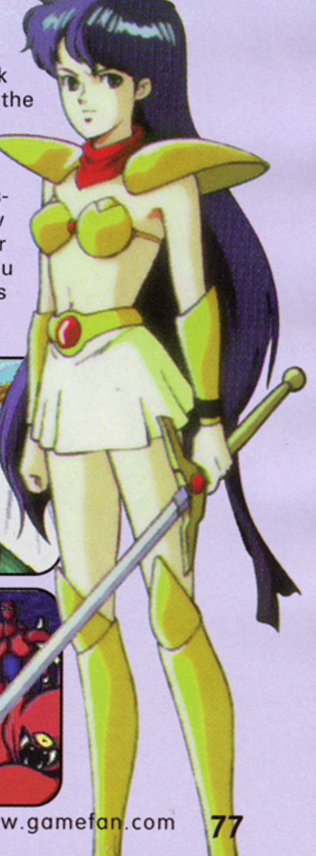
So, are there downsides to the game? Sure, a few. The PCE-CD version of *Valis* has no parallax scrolling (the Genesis version did), something that most Turbo games were missing. As well, being brutally honest, while I loved the game and really enjoyed it, if you don't have a lot of appreciation for older games, this one will probably look REALLY ancient to you. But, for me, *Valis* brings back memories of the wonderful days gone by, and while not an awesome 2D action game, it's certainly still good and horribly enjoyable. And, more than anything, it makes me wish that *Valis* wasn't one of those game titles that time has now forgotten. If you've got a TurboDuo or other PC Engine Super-CD capable system, and you have a chance to check this one out, don't pass up the experience. **Shidoshi**







PLANESCAPE TORMENT™

I've spent the last month doing nothing but gush over Black Isle's *Baldur's Gate*. Deep into a multiplayer game with some others on the GameFan staff (and some guy named Mike, from Edmonton), I'm still not satisfied. I need more TSR and I need it now. Since I know some of you feel the same way (I can't be the only sausage in America), I am pleased to be the bearer of some wondrous news: Black Isle has another TSR title in the works (and I'm not referring to the sequel to BG, or its mission packs). This journey into RPG heaven is entitled *Torment*, and it takes place in the realm known as Planescape.



For those of you who are not familiar with Planescape, here's a quick overview: Planescape is the universe in which all TSR worlds reside. The Forgotten Realms and Greyhawk are just mere blips on Planescape's radar, which encompasses innumerable planets and dimensions. The axis around which this universe revolves is the city of Sigil. Sigil is where the doors to these worlds are found and is ruled over by the watchful eye of The Lady of Pain. Passing through one of these doors will instantaneously teleport you to another location in the Planescape universe; it's like Sliders without the fat guy.

While the Planescape universe is vast in scale, the story of *Torment* is not. You play the part a nameless individual, an immortal creature who lives somewhere between the worlds of the living and the dead. With the passage of every lifetime, he finds himself transplanted back to a colossal mausoleum where all of Planescape's dead end up. This ability to cheat death might be an enviable trait to some, but for our hero, it's a curse. It seems that, with every renewed lease on life, he forgets the memories of lives past. Even worse, everyone around him (many of Planescape's denizens live quite long, themselves) remember his past lives











EL NINO: THE PERFECT COMPANION TO *BALDUR'S GATE*.

DEVELOPER - BLACK ISLE
PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

1 PLAYER
AVAILABLE 2ND QTR.







and the deeds he has performed; think Dana Carvey in *Clean Slate*. Your mission is clear: help him find his identity and guide him towards his ultimate destiny.

The parameters that the developers set up for *Torment* make for some refreshing gameplay. Whenever you are killed, you are transported back to the mausoleum and then randomly set down again in the world of Planescape, never knowing where you'll end up next. On top of that, your lack of recall will make NPC interaction more interesting and the consequences of your actions, more severe (and lasting). Since he has lived so many lifetimes, he has mastered every player class, so you will experience no leveling-up. The amnesia makes use of the abilities impossible, though, so instead your character must discover information that jogs his past memories, releasing the information necessary to use the class abilities.



You will be able to add NPCs to your party, but death will dissolve the group, forcing you to seek them out again. All NPCs have their own AI, so don't expect everyone who joins you to follow your orders, or stick it out if you begin to stray from their agendas.

The engine that *Torment* uses is essentially the same as implemented in *Baldur's Gate*. Most of the problem areas, that can be found in *BG*, have been addressed, so expect *Torment* to control better and be easier to interface with. The number of quick keys have been dramatically reduced, and the screen set-up is much more ergonomically designed. Many will be disappointed to learn that *Torment* does not support multiplayer, but solace can be found in the knowledge that the *Torment* storyline and gameplay make it a compelling one player RPG.

Torment looks like a solid winner and the perfect companion to *Baldur's Gate*. A strong showing will cement Black Isle as the premiere RPG developer and hopefully will pave the way for many TSR titles to come. **EN**



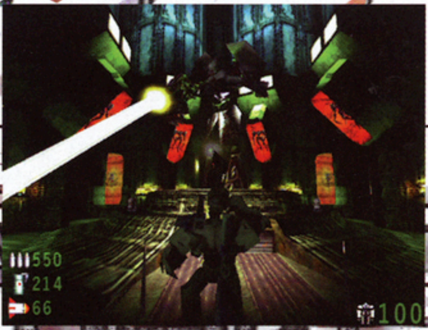














Slave Zero



Oh no, not another mech game... Accolade has gone out and developed a kind of 3rd person-*Shogo*. *Slave Zero* is the name, and while the title screams generic, the game does not.

Like *Shogo*, *Slave Zero* has you behind the controls of a six-story mechanical beast (actually it's a *bio*-mechanical creation, here...). You have commandeered this colossus in the name of your rebel faction, determined to topple the evil powers-that-be. The main megalopolis is under the control of said evil-doers, and they are using a strange energy source to maintain their vice-like grip on the populous (hmmm, could it be The Force?).

Once inside your mech, you will get to do all of those things that Big Mech guys do, like step on troops, pick up schoolbuses (you should probably leave the "little buses" alone since their cargo isn't much of a threat) and go head-to-head with other towering behemoths; it's *Terror of MechaGodzilla*, baby.

The engine *Slave Zero* implements is called the Ecstasy Engine (and you thought technological names like this were only found in Bond films), developed internally at Accolade. It will give *Slave Zero* the high level of detail, vast scale, and speed needed to pull off this game (or at least that is what the developers are hoping. Otherwise, Ecstasy will quickly turn into Agony).

A wide array of powerful weapons and moves will be available to your bio-mech, so be prepared to kick ass. Aside from being able to throw large objects at scattering people and blasting opposing bio-mechs with nasty future-weapons, you'll also be able to run, jump, and climb. No word yet as to whether or not you'll be able to skip, though...

It wouldn't be a PC game if it didn't support multi-player, and *Slave Zero* is no exception. You'll be able to fight against up to 15 other combatants over LAN, modem, Internet or NetAccolade. Unfortunately, if you have yet to get with the program, and don't have at least a Pentium 200 and a 3D graphics accelerator card, then forget multi-player. In fact, forget playing *Slave Zero* altogether, because you don't have enough under the hood to get this baby running. **EN**







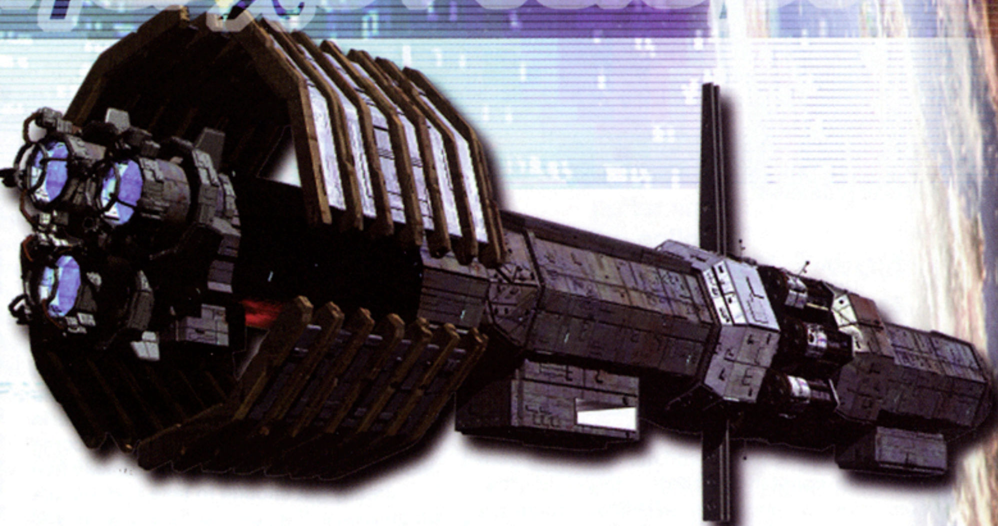
EL NINO: *TOMB RAIDER* WITH MECHS.

DEVELOPER - ACCOLADE
PUBLISHER - ACCOLADE

1-16 PLAYERS
AVAILABLE SPRING

Alpha Centauri

αλπηα χενταυρι











Nothing is more difficult than trying to improve upon something already considered to be perfect. Sid Meier, the creator of *Civilization 2*, faced this very same quandary when he set out to develop his newest strategy game, *Alpha Centauri*. A space-age *Civ 2*, *AC* tries to improve upon the formula without disrupting the key elements that made it a classic: namely, gameplay and ingenuity.

At the turn of the millenium, Earth has fallen on desperate times. Famine and war have ravaged the population and the prognosis for recovery is grim. The United Nations votes to send a ship of colonists on a mission to colonize the planet Chiron, in the Alpha Centauri system. It's a long shot, but still humanity's only real chance at survival.

Of course something goes wrong, and the cryogenic sleep that the colonists are in is broken. Upon awakening, the colonists discover that they have lost contact with Earth and are now on their own. In such tight quarters, for such a long period of waking, factions begin to develop and a power struggle ensues. Once planetfall is achieved, these factions begin to build their own, separate communities based on their personal agendas and beliefs. Question is, which group will rise to dominate the last bastion of humankind?

Exciting premise and equally exciting game. *Alpha Centauri* offers gamers another solid strategy experience that maintains enough in common with *Civ 2* to make veteran players right at home, while offering improved AI, more options and a new gameplay interface to make it a refreshing gaming experience.

Most of the problem areas of *Civ 2* have been addressed. Dealings with other factions offer more options, from being able to trade maps and comlink channels (phone numbers) for money or technology, to discussing coordinated battle plans against a common foe. Also improved is micro-management. You can set your building instructions for up to eight things at a time and automated terraformers allow you to shift your attention toward more important things, like exploration and warfare.

Many players will love the addition of a customize feature for building units. Choose chassis, weapons, armor and much more to make your own unique soldiers, tanks and naval units. Think your laser troops need to be able to use hypnosis? Then add it to their Special Powers slot and now they can beguile as well as blow up. For those of you who think this will only mire down the gaming experience (and you are right, to a degree), don't fret. The units made available to you by the computer have what they need to get the job done.

While there are innumerable minor improvements made to just about every facet of the game, some additions do detract and will undoubtedly annoy veteran *Civ 2* players. One big problem is the graphic representation of terrain improvements. Many of them are too big and clutter up the screen, making viewing a bit difficult. Also intrusive is the size of some of the units. Tanks, copters colony pods... their icons are all too big and add to the clutter.

Also a detractor is the interface. While *Civ 2* had a simple, easy-to-use interface, allowing instant access to all aspects of game control and information, *AC* does not. Just locating information on your own city improvements and government is a chore. I won't even go into the difficulty of finding out how to access info on your opponents, change what you're researching or implementing customized units. It is painfully clear that developers meddled too much with the interface.

Alpha Centauri still has many more positive aspects than negative. For hard-core strategy fans and those who never got enough of *Civ 2* (like me, for instance) this is a godsend. Unfortunately, the game is overly complicated and that will turn off many gamers (anyone remember the Koei *PTO* games?). **EN**

Viewpoint Score :89 | Developer - Firaxis | Publisher - Electronic Arts | 1-7 Players | Available Now

I'll shoot you! ...No, I swear! I'll do it!



neo... AnimeFan

More than just "the anime section" - Anime, Manga, Asian Live-Action, J-pop, Culture, and all related products.

I wanted to take a moment to speak on a non-anime related topic. Sometimes, it's easy to really write something off if you haven't given it a proper chance. The problem is, you don't always know how long it takes giving something a chance before you get a fair idea about it. Long ago, GameFan covered a PSX fighting game called Critical Blow, and while I didn't trash it, I sort of wrote it off. Well, since then, I've given it a lot of play time, and I must say that it is now one of my favorite PSX 3D fighters. Me and a friend have been playing the heck out of this thing, and the game has a simply fabulous engine once you give it a chance. So, there you go, just wanted to say that. [hehe] - shidoshi

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AnimeFan Online

http://www.gamefan.com

What ... what is this? Why is **AnimeFan Online** being covered here? Well, because by the time you read this, it will be a brand spankin' new **AnimeFan Online**! The site is back, bigger and more exciting than ever, with constantly updated news, information, reviews, previews, AF-Files, everything you see here in the print version of AnimeFan, and lots of other fun things that you don't! So where's the picture of it? The site isn't totally finished at press time, and I didn't want to show you a halfway finished image of it. [nervous smile] Be assured, though, it's pretty darn cool, and you should run to your computer right now and check it out! Honestly! Please...?! I've worked so hard on it!! [sobs]



Anime Artist Headquarters

http://headquarters.clearscape.com/

If there is one thing that the Internet has brought into possibility, it's a change for all of the would-be anime and manga fanartists out there to get a chance to show the world their world very cheaply. However, finding all of these artists out there can be quite a chore sometimes, or maybe an artist simply doesn't have a place to show his wares. That's where the **Anime Artist Headquarters** comes in. Featured is a HUGE array of artists from a wide amount of places and artistic styles. Whether you're looking for a specific artists, or simply wanting to check out some new artwork, stop by and give this site a try. As well, there is a large collection of cool fan-created manga titles, convention info, art tips, and BBS and chat options for those who are interesting in learning more from others.

Goods Showcase

Eve: Burst Error

So I get a call from ECM one day, telling me that he's got some weird anime-type game (those GF guys think anything without a lot of killing or explosions "weird") that he thinks would be better covered by me in AnimeFan. So, of course, it doesn't come until three days before my deadline, when I've already got enough to take care of. So, for this issue, I'm going to have to leave you with a preview of the game, since what little playing I HAVE done on it makes me really think this is one game I want to give some honest time to. I'm a sucker for digital comics (things like Snatcher for those not familiar with the term), and this seems like one I'm certainly going to enjoy.







Eve: Burst Error is a game centered around two main characters, Kojiroh and Marina, both of whom get involved in an incredible mystery. Kojirah is on the hunt for a missing masterpiece, and Marina is sent to protect the daughter of a high government official ... and while these two things seem totally un-related at first, as the story progresses their paths begin to cross. In fact, at certain points in the story, the two characters meet each other, and thus brings in the "Multi-Sight" game engine. Now, I'm not sure exactly what this multi-sight thing is, but it is explained as a game feature where the two characters interact with each other at times, and even end up helping one another. To be honest, it sounds quite like the things Capcom was saying when they were first making Resident Evil 2, so I'm very interested to see how this system comes into play and what exactly it does.

If you've never played a digital comic, there's basically a lot of beautifully drawn still anime images, a lot of pointing and clicking, and a lot of talking to people for extended periods of time. Okay, so now some of you have pretty much fallen asleep at that idea. [hehe] But no, really, these games are loads of fun. It's all about the character interaction, letting yourself get immersed into the story, finding your way through the unravelling plot. One of the things that I noticed right away is that there is a LOT of Japanese speech - in fact, up to the point that I got to, all of the characters I talked to talked back in Japanese. Very impressive, and big kudos to Himeya for leaving the voice in and only translating the text (of course, that's one of their selling points, and it's also less expensive to do it that way, but I still want to give any company that does that credit). I hadn't honestly heard of Himeya before I checked out this game, but they seem to have a few other titles out there right now as well, with more coming soon - so hopefully, you'll be seeing a lot more of them in the pages of AnimeFan. I'll bring you a real review of the game next issue, but until then, the game should be out by the time you read this, so I seriously suggest that you check it out. While it's not an adult title, it does have a bit of language, so be warned. The game is for PC, with only decent specs required, but it ran fine on my Mac running Virtual PC. You can find Himeya at www.himeya.com - shidoshi

Mai Shiranui's Dating Tips



"Hiiiiiii! I'm Mai, and I'm here to tell any girls out there the secret to getting the anime fanboy of your dreams!"



"Most important thing - look as Japanese as you can. Buy lots of Japanese clothing and wear them even if you look silly. Fanboys have a strange addiction to Japanese girls for some reason."



"Do the 'big-eyed looking-cute' thing a lot. Don't ask, I don't know either."

Hey, I wrote this after being up 24+ hours. Don't blame me if it makes absolutely no sense. [zzzzzzz]

It's the AnimeFan / Software Sculptors / Revolutionary Girl Utena

AnimeFan's Revolution Contest

In celebration of AnimeFan's "revolution" (aka new look), AnimeFan and Software Sculptors are teaming up to give one lucky winner an awesome prize - a copy of the **Revolutionary Girl Utena** VHS box set! The first four volumes of **Revolutionary Girl Utena**, packed up with an additional little gift (even I'm not sure what it is) all in a nice box with, I'm sure, lots of lovely **Utena** artwork all over it (I have yet to see pictures of the boxset, so...).

How to Win?

See the collage in the background of these pages? Your mission is to name all fifteen (15) anime titles that are shown in this collage. All entries who correctly guess all 15 will go into a drawing, and the person whose name is drawn wins! Simple as that! Uhm ... however ... should nobody correctly guess all 15 anime titles, then the person with the most correct answers will win. ^_^

The Rules

All entries must be mailed in by March 31st, 1999. (yes, the contest was extended) Only one entry per person per household. No purchase necessary, void where prohibited. Cute girls mailing in telling Shidoshi how wonderful he is, while certainly appreciated and encouraged, will not be given special treatment.

How to Enter

Mail your Full Name, Address, Age, Telephone Number, and E-mail Address, along with your list of 15 answers, to:

AnimeFan
"Revolution Contest"
6301 DeSoto Avenue
Unit #E
Woodland Hills, CA
91367

No entries via e-mail, please. The "Anime Survival Kit" contest will still happen - promise.



Artwork by Chiho Saitoh

AnimeFan rates each anime title that we cover in one of six different areas, with a rating of A+ to F-. Please remember that the actual letter grade is just as important as any + or - attached to it.

THIS PART NEW!

Had to get your attention. [hehe] In the DVD section, there are two ratings - one for the anime, and one for the DVD. The DVD review is NOT just for image quality - it's for the complete package. So, even if a DVD has beautiful image quality, it might have a lower score due to few to no extras.

Guide to Ratings Codes

We'll use this example:
Sub | Dub
VHS | LD | DVD

Black: The title is available in that format / language. So, for our example, the title is out in both Sub and Dub on VHS.

Underlined: The version being reviewed. So, we're reviewing the VHS Sub version.

Greyed: Not available. So, our title isn't out on LD.

Red: Coming soon / planned. Our example title is planned for release on DVD.

Send comments, letters, artwork to:

AnimeFan
6301 DeSoto Avenue
Unit #E
Woodland Hills, CA
91367

Or :
shidoshi@gamefan.com

Manga Scene

What's New in Print

Anime Interviews:
The First Five Years of Animerica

Animerica is known for a lot of things, one of which is the awesome interviews that the mag has had with a number of high profile anime and manga artists. Well, this month I wanted to take a quick look back at Anime Interviews, a collection of some of the best interviews Animerica featured in it's first five years of existence. The collection contains interviews with:

Yoshiyuki Tomino (**Mobile Suit Gundam**), Rumiko Takahashi (**Ranma 1/2**, **Urusei Yatsura**), Hayao Miyazaki (**Nausicaa**, **Kiki**), Masamune Shirow (**Appleseed**, **Ghost in the Shell**), Ryoichi Ikegami (**Mai the Psychic Girl**, **Crying Freeman**), Yukito Kishiro (**Gunnm**), Yoshiki Takaya (**Guyver**), Kosuke Fujishima (**Ah! My Goddess**, **You're Under Arrest!**), Yasuhiro Imagawa (**Giant Robo**), Hiroki Hayashi (**Tenchi Muyo**), Haruka Takachiho (**Crusher Joe**, **Dirty Pair**), Hiroyuki Kitazume (**Moldiver**), Shoji Kawamori (**Macross**, **Escaflowne**), Kei Kusunoki (**Ogre Slayer**, **Affair at the House of Yagami**), Buichi Terasawa (**Cobra**), Mamoru Oshii (**Ghost in the Shell** [anime], **Patlabor 2**), Gisaburo Sugii (**Street Fighter II**, **Street Fighter V**), Leiji Matsumoto (**Captain Harlock**, **Galaxy Express 999**), Ryosuke Takahashi (**Armored Troopers Votoms**, **Silent Service**), Nanase Okawa (**X/1999**, **Magical Knight Rayearth**).



This book is a wonderful accessory for die hard Otaku and new fans alike. Old hat anime fans will find it to be an interesting read and a nice resource, and new fans will find it to be the perfect piece to quickly get familiar with many of the "must know" names of the anime world.

Oh My Goddess!

The Devil in Miss Urd
Issue 3 of 5



Once again, Urd just can't stay out of trouble. After the group runs into Mara at a hot spring, she begins to concoct her devilish plan. She captures Urd, and separates her good side and evil side. Now that Urd's evil side is free, her powers are totally unleashed, and Mara plans to use her now servant to recruit more members for the dark side, if you will. But evil Urd has far bigger plans - like conquering the Earth! And what's worse, she's captured Skuld, and kisses Keiichi just at the right moment so Belldandy sees them! Can Bell handle the sight of Keiichi kissing her sister, and can the good Urd safe skuld and help stop her evil half? I fell in love with **Oh My Goddess!** from the moment I first saw it, and the manga continues to entertain me still. My only complaint is that 32 pages a month simply is not enough, and Dark Horse is far too slow on getting the **OMG** !graphic novels out. Oh, and I have to say ... I LOVE Urd's outfit from this issue. Man oh man, I need to find myself a girl who dresses like that. I simply adore the whole "padlock on a collar" thing she has going on. [dreamy look] Er... uhm ... ah, anyhow. [hides under desk] - shidoshi

IF YOU DON'T LAUGH, DON'T BLAME ME. I NEVER CLAIMED TO BE A COMEDIAN.



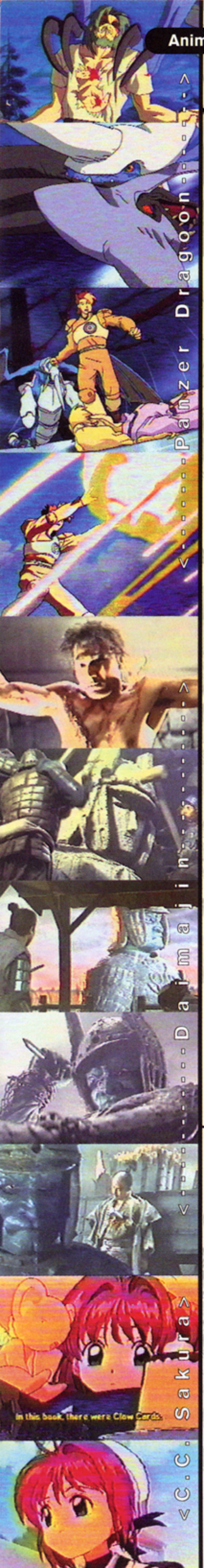
"Large groups of fanboys (and even fangirls) get together at these things called 'Cons.' If you want to win his heart, you'll have to go to one. As hard as it is, try to act like you're having fun.."



"Act really shy, even when lightly touching. All the girls in anime do that, and fanboys aren't used to having girl even be near them in the first place."



"If all else fails, dress as his favorite character and help fulfill his sick fantasies." [sigh]



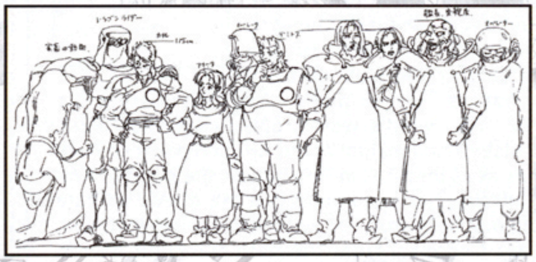
AF Reviews

What's playing in anime this month

Panzer Dragoon

Adventure • OAV• ADV Films • 11+
35 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
D+

I was quite excited when I heard that ADV had picked up the rights to many Sega-based anime titles - I've heard nothing but good things about the Japanese version of **Sonic**, and I'm dying to get my hands on **Sakura Wars**. The first title to see release is **Panzer Dragoon**, and sadly my excitement about watching it was quickly killed off not long after it started. Now, the **Panzer Dragoon** mythos is a perfect subject for an anime, and there was certainly a lot of potential in this one. The story seems like it started off as a strong idea - a young girl, Alita, becomes the catalyst for the resurrection on an ancient mysterious tower and it's army of evil dragons, and the young hunter Kyle is forced to side with another dragon to try to save her. Supported by character designs that weren't too bad and a very nice soundtrack, things were on the right track. So what's the problem? I know this tends to be a sore spot with me, but once again, I think that another anime title was really killed by a horrible short running time. **Panzer** is the type of story begging to be made into a feature-length movie, where the plot and character could have been fleshed out, not a quick half-hour mess. That, unfortuantely, is only the smaller complain. The design team decided to make **Panzer** very CG heavy - almost all of the backgrounds are CG, and there are a few cases where almost every object on screen is CG too. The trend of CG in anime is okay when done properly, but this isn't one where I would say that that is the case. The CG which was used is without question horrible, and the animated characters and their movement look very awkward over the backgrounds most of the time. Thus, **Panzer** ends up being what could have been a great title dragged down by a few glaring faults. If you're a **Pazner** fan, you'll still probably be curious enough to see it, but beyond that, I would avoid this one. I will say that it make me have a large urge to go play the game after watching it, though. **- shidoshi**



Daimajin

Live Action • Movie • ADV Films • 13+
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
B-

Going into **Daimajin**, you might be expecting just some cheezy "guy in rubber suit acting like a giant something or other" movie, like I was (especially from the box art and write-up on the back). However, much to my surprise, this wasn't either of those. Sure, the storyline has been seen before - a king is killed by a power hungy officer, and his children are whisked away until the prince, ten years later, goes back to the castle to try to re-take his throne. But this time, the prince has more than luck on his side, when his sister prays to their God to help her brother before he can be killed by the tyrant lord. Majin, as the larger than life stone god, only makes his appearance near the very end, and he is only one element of the story, not the entire thing. Don't get me wrong, this is certainly a movie with a big monster in it, I just wouldn't label it a "big monster movie". In fact, this title seems more like a period-samurai movie with the gaint Majin thrown in just to make the movie go out with a bang. Thankfully, as well, the movie has those wonderful qualities of story, atmosphere, and personality that all good Japanese films have. Though I'm not about to compare it to something like **Seven Samurai**, I wasn't sitting bored and wondering when the movie was going to get on to the "big creature destroying stuff" parts. Combining with the quality movie aspects are some really impressive special effects, especially for being made back in 1966: many of the scenes where two different shots have been spliced together are almost impossible to tell (something even some of today's blockbuster movies still can't get right). This is the first time that any of the **Daimajin** movies have been for sale in the US in letterboxed, subtitled versions, so if all you've seen is the dub, then do indeed give it another chance. I'm sure ADV could have released a decently dubbed version, but no matter how good of a job it might have been, it would have been hard to get the idea of badly dubbed Asian movies playing on TBS on a Saturday afternoon out of your head. As well, Japanese movies are always far better in Japanese anyhow, so hey. I liked this one, it's good, check it out, the end. **- shidoshi**

Card Captor Sakura

When fourth-grader Kinomoto Sakura accidentally releases the spirits sealed in a deck of magical cards, she is assigned the task of retrieving them by Kerberos, the cards' guardian. **Card Captor Sakura** chronicles her (sometimes clumsy) efforts to seal these mischevous spirits. This is no easy task - the cards aren't about to go down without a fight. Sakura must master the powers of the cards she captures, and use them against the other spirits. **CCS** is one of the most entertaining TV series to appear in a long time. Though not as funny as the early **Pretty Sammy** TV episodes, it's the most intelligent and well-written mahou-shoujo (magical girl) anime I've yet seen. It's also, surprisingly, ridiculously well-animated for a TV series. Fans of the genre absolutely must see this. **- Jay McGavren**

Non-US Anime

Stuff we're missing out on in the US

Evangelion: Rebirth

Anyone who has enjoyed the Evangelion series couldn't help but be interesting in getting the chance to see the movies. Unfortunately, as of yet, they still haven't been released in the US, and as of now it still looks unlikely that they will be anytime soon. So, of course, when I got the opportunity to check out Evangelion: Rebirth, I took it. Well ... let me just say that I wasn't surprised, to put it mildy. The movie kicks off by throwing us into a major crisis without any warning: the powers that be want Nerv elimited, and they're willing to go to any length to get it done. The first half of the movie is really cool, with a nice amount of drama and a wonderfully cool battle between Asuka in Unit 02 and the newly completed batallion of Eva Unit 05 models. From there, sadly, the movie slips into typical Gainax fashion storytelling, with lots of flashing images, quick cuts, and loads of other nonsense. Ugh. I expected this kind of cop-out ending from the TV series, but not from a big-time move. Dissapointing. **- shidoshi**




AF Trivia: Answer Last Page

Gainax video game translated and almost released in US, but sadly never was, and was on Shidoshi's 1997 "Most Wanted Games" list.

Battle Atheletes: Victory

Comedy • TV (4 eps) • Pioneer • 13+
85 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
B-

Lookie that... last issue it was the OAV, and now I bring you the first volume of the **Battle Athletes: Victory** TV series. **BA:V** is based on storylines set before the OAV, but if it is OFFICIALLY said to be that, or if it is taking a cue from Tenchi Muyo (with it's neverending amoung of "alternate universes") I can't honestly say. Here we see Akari at school, trying desperately to be one of the few chosen advance to the University Satellite. Since this is pre-University, save Akari and Tanya and a cameo here and there from the coach, don't get



your hopes up to see any of the previous cast (I was especially sad to not see Kris again). Instead, we get a whole new cast of characters, which brings up one of the questionable parts about this series. The new cast is strong, and each character looks like they will all get a chance to be more than just tools to help tell the story of a select few. That's very good to see, of course, but what this does is push Akari from the limelight. Where she was the "hero" of the OAV, here she gets lost among the rest of the cast, which just seems a bit odd. If that wasn't enough for poor Akari, she now acts more like a crybaby, where before she was just someone who sometimes lacked confidence. The humor has also changed, and where the OAV had more subtle types of humor, **BA:V** is slapstick all the way. Not that it isn't bad, it's just certainly more fluffy than the OAV was (which some already though was a bit fluff). All that said, however, I've heard that this series really pickes up come episode five, so maybe it'll tighten up a bit with time. So far, it's a good title, it just needs to do more and beef itself up some in order to be a really memorable title. And, before I go, I must mention Jessy. It's nice to finally see an American character that I don't have to be ashamed of. **[hehe]** **- shidoshi**

Magical Project S

Mahou-shoujo • TV (4 ps) • Pioneer • 3+
100 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
B+

It's hard not to watch **Magical Project S** and admit to the blatant similarities between it and **Sailor Moon**: a young girl, Sasami (Usagi) finds out that she is a "magical soldier girl," and is now accompanied by Ryo-ohki, her talking guide "cat" (Luna). Using her magic batton, she transforms into the magical soldier "Pretty Sammy," and (against her wished) is forced to use her newly gained powers against a host of weird enemies which threaten her unsuspecting city. Thankfully, while **MPS** is indeed a rip on **Sailor Moon**, it never tries to deny that fact, and knows that it's a silly show that asks nothing more than you have a fun time watching it. **MPS** also borrows greatly from another anime - the original **Pretty Sammy** series. The basic idea of the storyline is almost exactly the same, so if you've seen **PS**, you'll notice a lot of identical factors here. However, I think **MPS** is much better than the **PS** series. Why? Well... I think **PS** was trying to take itself too seriously, and was too connected to Tenchi to a point where it felt like nothing more than a spin off. **MPS**, however, is cute, funny, light hearted, and it's easy to forget that it even has any connection to **Tenchi Muyo**. Another good point I've got to give **MPS** is that I don't always really notice opener or ending music, but I noticed BOTH here, and fell in love with the ending theme, "Persona." If you like the "Magical Girl" type anime, then I think that you'll get a kick out of **Magical Project S**. It's light-hearted, cutesy fun, and it's certainly a wonderful title for the younger anime fans out there (an anime genre that there isn't always enough of in the US). **- shidoshi**

Domain of Murder

Mystery • OAV • CPM • 16+
51 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
C+

While out for a walk with her son one day, Mrs. Toyama looks over to see something which sends her into shock: a picture of her husband, who has been missing for three years, of a poster of wanted criminals. He has been accused of murdering his mistress and a member of the Yakuza, and taking the poster, she contacts the Akatsuka Private Investigations office. A young P.I. by the name of Goro Nanase takes the case, and Mrs. Toyama (a woman who, later on in the story, I absolutely wanted to slap some sense into) tells him that she wants the chance to talk to her husband one more time alone before the police can get to him. But as Goro begins looking for the lost Tsuyoshi Toyama, he begins to uncover a far larger story behind the man's dissapearance. Did Tsuyoshi kill those people? If so, why? And was the accident he had many years ago, which caused his daughter to be killed, really an accident?

The hunt to first find, then stop Toyama is a particularly frightening one: not only is he planning to bring harm to his own child, but his belief that he will be doing the right thing with such a plan makes him all the more scary. However, **Domain of Murder** suffers from a storyline that is too weak to fully carry that idea all of the way through, and had it been filled with more suspense and depth, this might have been a stronger title. I never really lost interest the entire time that I watched it, but once it was over, I didn't really like it or hate it either way. I give it credit for being an example of an anime genre not seen enough over here in the US, but it will probably make little more of an impact beyond that. **- shidoshi**

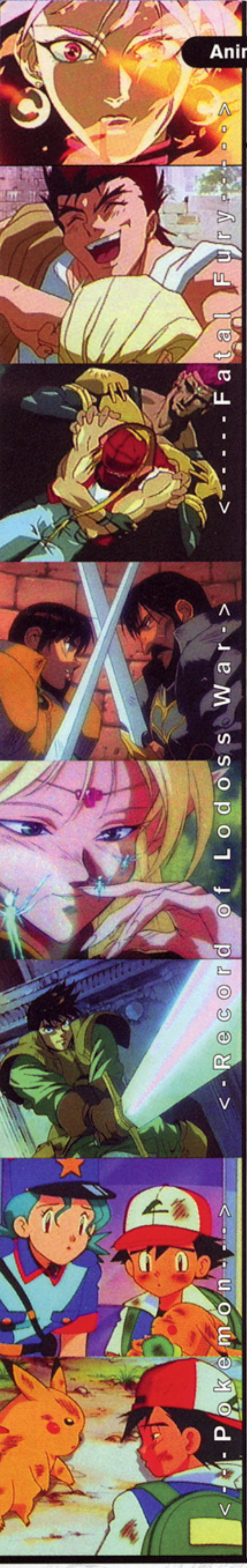
Ninja Cadets! *AF's "Best of the Issue!"*

Adv/Comedy • OAV • Urban Vision • 14+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
B

The time is feudal Japan, and, of course, two clans are in a bitter war with one another. The evil Kabusu clan has devised a plan to attack the Byakuro and steal their infant princess. The Kabusu attacks the Byakuro castle, and a great many lives are lost, but the princess is smuggled out and taken to be raised in hiding. The princess is Sakura, and she grows up to be one of many ninja cadets in a small clan. The day comes when Sakura and the rest of the cadets are sent off for their final exam, but the magnitude of their test isn't completely understood by them: their master sends them off to the conquered Byakuro castle to recover the ancient magical scrolls stored there. However, that's not the worst of the situation. A small group of Kabusu assassins, lead by the evil witch Jame, are out to find the Byakuro princess, because she is said to contain inside her a power of great magnitude. When Jame and her team find out that Sakura is actually the now grown princess, the cadets have more to worry about than simply getting in and out of the castle with as little as possible. Can Sakura and crew not only pass their test, but survive Jame's evil attacks?

The cast of **NC!**, while not being the most original bunch of character designs in the world, have enough personality and flair to them to make for a strong and likable cast. Especially of note is Jame - I totally fell in love with her, not only because of her style and personality, but because she had this look to her that was absolutely beautiful (she has this hair thing going on very similar to Rose from **SFA**). I say that Jame should get her own series, but hey, that's just me. Er ... anyhow. **[hehe]** The story was fun, a great mix of action and light-hearted comedy, and the animation quality was of equal levels. And, if that's not enough, it's got some fun "giant monster" scenes to it! I'd especially recommend **Ninja Cadets!** to fan of things like the **Slayers** and **Ruin Explorers**, but encouragement to check this one out goes around to everyone. **- shidoshi**





AF DVD Connection

Fatal Fury: the Movie

Adventure • Movie • Viz • 13+
100 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
Anime A- DVD A-

The Anime

As I said when I first reviewed it many issues ago, I thought that **Fatal Fury: the Movie** was the best video game-based anime released, and I still think that comment is absolutely true. We've got an actual storyline not simply based around a bunch of people beating each other up, we've got loads of character development, and a decent amount of the **Fatal Fury** cast shows up without being meaningless characters. I'm sure some of you may bring up my SNK bias as reason for my liking it, but as I've stated before in the pages of GameFan, I'm not a huge fan of the **Fatal Fury** series - I liked this one simply because it's worth the praise.

The DVD

There's no question by now that Pioneer knows how to do anime on DVD, and **FF:tM** is another prime example of a top-notch transfer. It still doesn't rival the second Tenchi movie in terms of the absolute best looking anime DVD to date, but it's certainly up there with the best of the best. Thrown onto the disc is a variety of fun stuff, including the original Japanese trailers, conceptual sketches, character profiles, and a story guide to what happened in the two **Fatal Fury** OAV titles. The menus look nice, with a crisp and clean design, but I did have one problem - on my player, at least, it seemed to take far longer than it should when switching between listed items and menus. It ends up being nothing more than a bit annoying, but it is indeed that. Back when Pioneer started doing anime DVD titles, this was among their first announcements, and I've been eager to get ahold of it ever since then. Thankfully, this is a top notch DVD, and gives you the chance to experience this stellar movie even better. **- shidoshi**

Record of Lodoss War

Drama • OAV • Image • 14+
290 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
Anime A+ DVD C+

The Anime

Geeze... I don't even know what to say. While **Lodoss** might not be the **Star Wars** of the anime world (what would be? hmm... good question), it's certainly close, and is one of the true epics of anime. However, there tends to be this trend that almost no one has ever seen the entire series all of the way through (I hadn't ever see the entire thing myself). Now, with the whole 13-episode set on two convenient little DVDs, at a price around half that of the VHS box sex, you've got no excuse at all to not finally sit down and watch the entire saga.

The DVD

You see, I have this rule - it's the "Two Hour DVD" rule? What exactly is that, you say? Well, my rule says that you should NEVER go beyond two hours per side/layer on a DVD, and to be honest, you shouldn't even push that far (at least not with higher importance titles). Sure, you can do it, but you sacrifice potential higher quality - and quality should always come before getting more out of less room. Well, sadly, Image doesn't exactly share my feelings on this rule. They have stuffed the entire 13-episode Lodoss series onto two single-sided DVDs - sounds a bit scary, doesn't it? Not that the DVDs don't look good most of the time, because they do. But while watching, you can easily see scenes where the anime is just crying out "I could have looked even better than this!" and the entire thing seems a bit grainy. Had Image been so flippant with something other than **Lodoss**, I wouldn't be so upset, but I mean, you know. Oh well - it's still FAR better than VHS quality. A little "Making Of" feature is included, which was kind of cool. This one is REQUIRED if you own a DVD player. **- shidoshi**

Pokemon: I Choose You! Pikachu!

Childrens • TV (3 eps) • Viz Video • 3+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
Anime B- DVD B-

The Anime

Hey, it's **Pokemon**. It's cute, it's silly, it's got a little yellow rat that you either think is adorable or you think would be adorable if he were set on fire. **Pokemon** follows that spunky and easily excited boy Ash as he journeys out to become the best and most known Pokemon trailer in all the land. His path, however, is littered with the wily Misty, the cool and calm Brock, the very independent and stubborn Pikachu, and the required rivals Gary and the ever lovable Team Rocket. If you've never seen **Pokemon** on US TV or on video, you might want to check it out first to make sure that it's your type of thing. If you didn't like shows such as **Sailor Moon**, well ... you might not be a big Pokemon fan (as it's similar in the ways of silliness and innocent storylines).

The DVD

Some TV series don't look all that improved on DVD. Not **Pokemon** - very nice video quality. If you were hoping that a DVD release would mean that you would get **Pokemon** in both sub and dub, well, you'll be disappointed. Since it was pretty much known that this would be the case, you can't really blame it for not having a sub version included. However, it has been mumbled that future volumes may have both if the rights can be worked out for them, but don't hold your breath waiting for it to happen. While the disk itself isn't loaded with options (all it has are chapter stops, and those are only at the start of each episode), it does come with a little pocket **Pokemon** manga, which is kind of cool. If you're a huge **Pokemon** fan, or you're the type who would rather have anime on DVD than VHS no matter what it is, then here's another title for you to spend money on. Otherwise, this isn't a "must have!", but it's still nice.. **- shidoshi**

Grave of the Fireflies - Update

After reading my review of the **Grave of the Fireflies** DVD, the DVD guys over at Central Park Media called me right away wanting to talk about the quality of the video. They made it quite clear that quality was of top priority over there, and that on their end, they had no problems at all. After a bit of testing, I've still come to no clear-cut conclusion to what exactly is going on, but I've narrowed it down to one of two things: I'm insane, and seeing things, or the problem is with the early Toshiba model of DVD players (I own a 2006, and I tried it on a 3006 [which is basically the same machine but with component video out], and both showed the same problems). In my review, I still recommended that people purchase the DVD, and said that the problem was quite possibly with my DVD player and not the disc itself. I'd like to make that point even stronger now that it seems that my player may indeed be the culprit (I hope to know more come next issue). This, combined with the fact that my DVD player seems to have artifacts on every single DVD I watch on it, even if they are small, is pushing me to see that I'm going to break down soon and just buy a newer player. Of course, this comes right after I shelled out $500+ on a DreamCast... [sigh] Maybe if enough of you write in and ask the higher ups at GameFan to buy me a new DVD player, they'll spring for one for me. [hehe] [hopeful look] **- shidoshi**

"Daria, do you ever think you're wasting your life?" "Only when I'm awake."


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You know... the news.

AF's News Service



• Urban Vision Sees DVD in the Future

Even thought they have yet to release any DVD titles, Urban Vision is very serious about the format, and their future looks bright. It looks that they are making sure that DVD rights are included in ALL new title contracts that they sign, and there is even a title being finished up in Japan that will come out ONLY on DVD. Like other anime companies, such as ADV Films, don't take the fact that they are not yet in the DVD market to mean that they have no interest in it. I've said it before, I'll say it again - DVD is TOO big of a medium now for any anime company to ignore, and the support that has been shown so early in the platform's life is proof that this won't be a repeat of the anime of LD situation.

• Details on Tenchi Muyo! DVD Box Set

• THX approved
• 2 discs
• Jap 2.0 English 2.0 Jap 5.1 • Surround - 3 channel
• Re-transferred film

Third Disc - Encyclopedia
•OVA, TV, Movies, and Tenchi Muyo in Love! 2 movie info

Extra Goodies
• Gold foil printed plastic collectible cart - gold text, printed onto plastic, with an image (put into first 3,000 sets)

• Hear Lions Roar in the US

A petition is going around to get **Hyakujuuou Goraion** (tr. Hundred-Beast King Go-lion), which was changed and made into **Voltron: Defender of the Universe** for US release back in 1984, release on VHS, LD, or DVD in it's original form. If you would like to help out in this petition, check out the support website at **http://gpetit.cjb.net**

• Trivia Answer

Princess Maker 2. The DOS version was translated and ready to go, copies were even sent out for review (and covered in a few mags), then the company releasing it here, Ignite, seemingly disappeared. Thankfully, I snagged the GameFan copy and finally got to play the game in English after years of wanting to. Now, if only **TokiMemo** and **Sakura Wars** would be translated into English. **[sigh]**

• Key to DVD?

Rumor has it Viz is very interested in going back and DVD-ing a lot of their back catalog. If so, very cool. I want **Key**!

• New Titles from Bandai

Anime Village has announced a lot of new and very exciting titles for the first half of 1999.

Awol
Format : VHS — Type : -
Sub : Vol 1 - TBA 99 — Dub : -

Blue Submarine No. 6
Format : VHS — Type : OVA
Length : 4 Episodes
Sub : Vol 1 - TBA 99 — Dub : -

Brain Powered
Format : VHS — Type : -
Sub : Vol 1 - TBA 99 — Dub : -

The CLAMP Detective School
Format : VHS — Type : TV
Sub : Out Now — Dub : -

Cowboy Bebop
Format : VHS — Type : TV
Sub : Vol 1 - June 99 — Dub : -

Don't Leave Me Alone Daisy
Format : VHS — Type : -
Sub : Vol 1 - June 99 — Dub : -

Eatman
Format : VHS — Type : -
Sub : Vol 1 - March 99 — Dub : -

Eatman 98
Format : VHS — Type : OVA
Sub : TBA 99 — Dub : -

Ehrgeiz
Format : VHS — Type : -
Sub : TBA 99 — Dub : -

Gundam Movies 1-3
Format : VHS — Type : Movies
Length : 4 Movies
Sub : Out Now — Dub : -

Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory
Format : VHS — Type : OVA
Sub : Out Now — Dub : In Release

Haunted Junction
Format : VHS — Type : -
Sub : Vol 1 - March 99 — Dub : -

Outlaw Star
Format : VHS — Type : OVA
Sub : Vol 1 - May 99 — Dub : -

Saber Marionette J Again
Format : VHS — Type : OVA
Sub : Vol 1 - April 99 — Dub : -

Silent Mobius (TV)
Format : VHS — Type : TV
Sub : TBA 99 — Dub : -

AF News Service Preview: The Slayers : Next

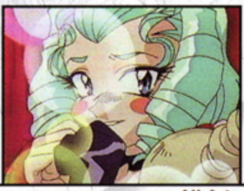
Slayers fans, take note! **Slayers NEXT**, the second **Slayers** TV series (which originally aired in Japan in 1996), is making it way to the US this April thanks to Software Sculptors. **Slayers NEXT** takes places a year or so after the original TV series, and we find Lina and Gourry still travelling together looking for adventures. Lina's interests now lie in a collection of ancient tomes which are said the be the ultimate source of knowledge for a variety of topics and crafts. Lina, being the type who is always looking for a way to be even more powerful and magically impressive, is determined to find these rare books.

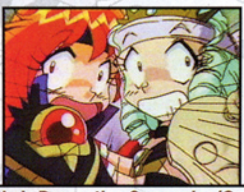

Martina

Two new additions to the cast appear in **Slayers NEXT**, Martina and Xelloss. **Martina** is the daughter of the king of Zoana, who once tried to conquer the Saillune kingdom by capturing it's princess, Amelia Wil Telsa Saillune. But when Lina not only foiled those plans, but nearly destroyed Martina's kingdom, the green-haired princess vowed revenge. Now, she follows Lina and the others around, and tries her best to make their lives hell. Her only downfall is that she isn't especially good at doing that, so she ends up messing up her own plans as much as the plans of others.


Xelloss

Xelloss is a rather secretive and mysterious character. He is the priest of Greater Beast Zelas-Metallium, one of the Mazoku lords - which means, basically, that he is an underling to a demon. He is rather a trickster, and prefers to play games with those he is after instead of just getting the job over with. As well, he is a very carefree type of person, going around as if he fears little of anything in life. In fact, he has a great magical power, and resistance to a variety of things, so this attitude may actually be for good reason. His exact mission or reason for being around isn't exactly clear. **- shidoshi**







Okay, so my comment on this page last issue was totally uncalled for. Gomen-ne.

Hocus Pocus



Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leafs you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail to GameFan, or email hocuspocus@gamefan.com.

Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

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GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15-watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

BattleTanx - N64
All Weapons, Powered-up Weapons, New Modes

The following codes are to be entered at the password screen:









Invisible Tanks: CRSTLCLR
Hurl Mode: HVRL
(makes the screen roll)



Invincibility: MSTSRVV



Trippy Mode: CNCTHRTM
(changes the color of the sky constantly)
Unlimited Ammo: LTSFBLLTS
Unlimited Lives: LVFRVR
All Weapons: PLVRZM
Better Weapons:
In any multi-player mode, if you collect 15 or more of a weapon, you can fire a special version of the weapon. Press A+B at the same time with any weapon except for Grenades.

Sega Rally 2 - DC Import
All cars, hidden bonus level



Having a hard time getting first place to get all those souped-up vehicles? Well, we have the answer to your woes. To get all the cars in the game, at the title screen press up, down, up, B, A, left, B, B, and down using the D-pad. You'll hear a confirmation tone if you've input the code correctly.

Hidden Bonus Level
Ever had the urge to knock down a row of construction cones just for the hell of it? Well, Sega knew exactly what you were thinking. To access

the hidden section found in the Rivera stage, make sure you select Arcade Mode. It doesn't matter if you select either Championship or Practice Mode.

When you finally get to the Rivera race, drive like you normally would up until the very last




turn. As you approach the final turn of any lap, you'll see two red cones. When you knock both these cones down, you'll hear a sound for each cone. Now, if you turn the car around so you're racing the track backwards, drive for a bit, and you'll see an opening to a hidden area. When




you approach this area, you'll see a bunch of cones throughout this track. You'll gain 100 points for every cone you knock and you'll have 29 seconds separate from your normal time, to do it. You don't have to go backwards to access the track, since the hidden area will always be open once you knock down the first two cones.

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus - PS

Level Select, Movie Cheat, Skip to Next Path





Level Select

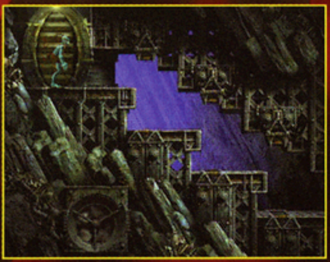
Having trouble getting all 300 Mudokans? Well, this very handy Level Select cheat should fix that problem. At the main screen (the one with Abe's head sticking out in the middle), enter the following commands: Press and hold R1, then press ↓, ↑, ←, →, ✖, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ●, ↓, ↑, ←, →





Skip to Next Path

If you're getting stuck on certain levels, why not just skip it? To perform the skip to the next path, during gameplay simply enter the following: ●, ●, ✖, ✖, ■, ■







Movie Cheat

Finally, there's the Movie Cheat code that allows you to watch all the super-rad cinema sequences in the game. To do this, go to the main screen (with Abe's almost cute face smack in the center) and, while holding R, press ↓, ↑, ←, →, ■, ●, ▲, ●, ■, ●, ↓, ↑, ←, →

Smash Brothers - N64 Import

Secret characters, hidden stage, change outfits



Play as Luigi

To play as Luigi, finish the Bonus Practice 1 with all 8 main characters (no secret ones). Luigi will challenge you and when you defeat him, you'll be able to select Luigi.

Play as Captain Falcon

To play as Captain Falcon of F-Zero X fame, finish the game with any character. Captain Falcon will challenge you, and after you defeat him, he will be selectable.



Play as Purin

To play as Purin, another Pokemon, first get Captain Falcon, then finish the game with any character. After you beat the game again, Purin will challenge you. Defeat Purin and she will be selectable.

Play as Ness

To play as Ness finish the game on Normal difficulty, set on three lives, and without continuing. After you have beaten the final boss, the credits will roll, and then Ness will challenge you. Beat him, and he will be a playable character.



Change Outfits

To change the colors and outfits of characters, press C-Right, C-Down, or C-Left after you select your character. Press C-Up to select your character's normal color.

Vigilante 8 - N64
Level Select, Alien Character

Enter at the password screen:
GIMME_DA_ALIEN
LEVEL_SHORTCUT

Street Fighter Zero 3 - PS import
All Special Match-Up Introductions

Well, here is a list of all the Special Introductions that occur right before the match starts. Note that some will only happen against a CPU opponent.

Adon vs. Sagat
Adon and Sagat practice some sparring before fighting each other.

Vega vs. Cammy
Vega waves to Cammy his with glowing hand.

Cody vs. Guy
Much like *Final Fight*, a bunch of oil drums will land around both Cody and Guy, and they both destroy their stack of oil drums.

Dan vs. Sagat
Dan cries out "Oyaji!" with his fist in the air while Sagat laughs.

E. Honda vs. Sodom
E. Honda and Sodom both do a traditional Sumo entrance pose.

Ken vs. Ryu
Ken gives Ryu a noogie before the match starts.

Ryu vs. Sagat
There are 3 Special Introductions for the ever classic match-up of Ryu vs. Sagat:
1) Sagat's scar glows
2) Sagat holds Dan by his head and throws him aside before the match starts
3) Sagat holds Dan by his head and Tiger Uppercuts him into the air (X-ism Sagat only)

Sakura vs. Dan
Dan rolls in and taunts while Sakura just scratches her head.

Zangief vs. Zangief
Both cloaked Zangief's remove their cloaks.

Evil Ryu vs. Gouki
Both Evil Ryu and Gouki simultaneously try to perform a Raging Demon but both get negated.

Guile vs. Nash
Both Guile and Nash salute each other.

Any character vs. CPU M. Bison
A boxing bag hangs in the center of the screen, and M. Bison comes into the screen and punches the bag across the screen.

Sakura vs. Deejay
Deejay lies on the floor next to his boom box while Sakura scratches her head.

Game Shark Codes

Bloody Roar 2 (PS Import)

Enable Hidden Characters:
801C02E4 FFFF
Infinite Health Player 1
80177B80 0100
80177B82 3221
80177B88 0002
80177B8A 1020

Infinite Health Player 2
80177B80 0100
80177B82 3221
80177B88 0002
80177B8A 1420

Infinite Health
80177B92 2400

Open Movies
801C02C0 FFFF

Armored Core: Project Phantasm (PlayStation)

Infinite Energy
80042506 CB20

Infinite Cash
8003BCD2 0020

All Right Arm Weapons
300343C9 0001
800343CA 0101
800343CC 0101
800343CE 0101
800343D0 0101
800343D2 0101
800343D4 0101
800343D6 0101
800343D8 0101
800343DA 0101

All Left Arm Weapons
800343DC 0101
800343DE 0101
300343E0 0001

All Back Weapons
3003438D 0001
8003438E 0101
80034390 0101
80034392 0101
80034394 0101
80034396 0101
80034398 0101
8003439A 0101
8003439E 0101
800343A0 0101
800343A8 0101
800343AA 0101
800343AC 0101
800343AE 0101
300343B0 0001
800343B4 0101
800343B6 0101
800343B8 0101
800343BA 0101
800343C0 0101
300343C2 0001

All Heads
800342F0 0101
800342F2 0101
800342F4 0101
800342F6 0101
800342F8 0101

All Cores
80034302 0101
80034304 0502

All Arms
3003430D 0001
8003430E 0101
80034310 0101
80034312 0101
30034314 0001
30034319 0001
8003431A 0101
8003431C 0101
8003431E 0101
80034320 0101

All Legs
30034325 0001
80034328 0101
8003432A 0101
3003432D 0001
3003432F 0001
80034330 0101
80034332 0101
30034335 0001
80034336 0101
30034338 0001
8003433A 0101
3003433C 0001
80034340 0101
30034343 0001

R-Type Delta - PS Import

Infinite Life
8001014E 0009
8001014C 0009

Secret Fighter and Chapter Select
80013A4C FFFF
80013A4E 00FF

Star Ocean: 2nd Story - PS Import

Infinite Money
8009A9D8 C9FF
8009A9DA 3B9A

Street Fighter Alpha 3 PlayStation COMBOS GALORE!

While not basking in the combo festivities that the Capcom *Versus* series is known for, *SFZ3* has some pretty ugly combinations itself. While we cannot show you every combo out there, here are some of crazier ones found in *SFZ3*. A HUGE thanks goes to Jchensor, who has a master's degree in combo terminology and creativity.

X-ism Cody

The "Cody Doesn't Suck" combo (30+ hits)

For those insisting that Cody is the worst character in the game, perhaps this combo will change your mind.



First, your target has to be in the corner for this combo to work. Jump in with a Fierce punch to the noggin.



As you land, continue to smack the victim with a Crouching Fierce punch.



Perform a Strong Criminal Upper. Note that the victim can flip out right after this move. But if they don't...



...Then jump and immediately meet the falling target with a Jumping Fierce punch.



You'll land before your opponent does. So, pummel them back up with a Crouching Fierce punch.



Two-in-one into Cody's Final Destruction as the victim is reeling from the Fierce punch.



The pattern here is to hit the target with two standing punches, a crouch punch and repeat...



If done with the proper timing, you can achieve a 30 + combo (33 is the max so far) that takes off over 80%! So who said Cody sucks?!?

Z-ism Guy

The "Thank you Daigo much" combo (18 hits)

Guy was virtually unpopular till the *SFZ3* champion from Japan, Daigo, showed us the dangers of Guy. Remember this combo is best done when the target is away from the corner.



There are many ways to start up this combo. One way is to land a straight Jumping Roundhouse (hits twice).



As soon as you land, sock the dummy with a Standing Strong punch.



Chain the Fierce punch like Guy normally would in his regular chain.



Two-in-one into Guy's Level 3 Bushin Gorai Kyaku, which should push the opponent closer to the wall.



As soon as the last hit of the Super connects, add in a Standing Jab punch while the target is in the air.



While the lackey is still in the air, add a Standing Strong punch. The target should be in the corner by now.



Chain in the Standing Fierce punch while the enemy is in the air and in the corner.



Add in the final chain combo hit with the Standing Roundhouse Kick. BUT WAIT, there's more!



While the opponent is falling, add in a Standing Strong punch. Don't try to hit your foe to early.



Chain a Standing Fierce punch to send your target back up again.



Finally, 2-in-1 into a Roundhouse Bushin Senpuu Kyaku for a total of 18 hits plus some major hurt. Danka Daigo!

Z-ism Gen

The "John Choi Corner Standard" combo (9 hits)

While only nine hits, this Gen combo damages like you wouldn't believe. This combo was made famous by U.S. *SF* Gen Legend John Choi.



Once again, this combo works only in the corner. Get Gen to jump in with a Roundhouse kick.



Tag on another Roundhouse kick while still in the air right before you land.



Upon landing, hit your opponent with a Standing Jab punch. Note, you should be in the Ki-Ryuu stance.



Chain a Crouching Short Kick which knocks the target up into the air.



As soon as you launch the enemy in the air, maim the target with a Jumping Roundhouse kick.



Again, while still in the air, nail the unfortunate turkey with another Roundhouse kick.



Upon landing before the enemy, instantly perform Gen's Level 3 Jakouha Super.



While only nine hits, the damage done is alarmingly high (as you can see in the screenshot above).

X-ism Deejay

The "Meaty Combo Attacks Are Back In" combo (16 hits)

Probably the best combo characters out of the new PS lineup (Fei Long comes second, Guile third, and T. Hawk a dismal last), this combo does a LOT of damage, but again, it's a corner combo.



While you can knock down your target with a lot of attacks, we like to start with a Short Rolling Sobat.



While the foe is getting up, perform a Jab Air Slasher. Jump as a soon as you can.



As the Air Slasher hits, introduce Deejay's Jumping Roundhouse kick to the foe's face.



Land and continue the combo with a Crouching Jab punch. All this time, be charging back for...



...the Jab Air Slasher you deliver for the next hit in the combo. While the victim is still recovering...



...perform another Crouching Jab punch. You should be charging back as you deliver this punch.



As soon as the Jab punch lands, perform a Crouching Short kick, while still charging back.



Finally, release all that charging up you've been doing by performing his Sobat Carnival Super. And no, we're not done yet.



As the victim falls from the Super, perform a Crouching Jab punch before the foe lands on the floor.



Finally, perform Deejay's Roundhouse Jackknife Maximum for a total hit count of 16!

Think you've got a combo in *SFA3* that needs to be told? Well, do tell! E-mail at achau@gamefan.com or write to:

Combo Craziness
6301 De Soto Ave. Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Bloody Roar 2: Bringer of the New Age - PS import

Here are the moves to all eleven of the characters in the game. A big thanx to Sleepy@ for a lot of the info.

Alice

P	Jab
→ + P	Middle Punch
← + P	Strong Punch
↑ + P	Overhead Punch
↘ + P	Elbow Midstrike
↙ + P	Knee Strike
K	High Kick
→ + K	Forward Flip Kick
← + K	Backward Flip Kick
↘ + K	Knee Kick
↙ + K	One Foot Sweep
↑ + K	Jump Kick
→, → + P	Knee Punch
→, → + K	Flying Knee
→, → + B	High Strong Kick
↓ + B	Lunging Punch
↑ + B	Drop Kick
← + B	Ground Atomic Fall

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Somersault
↓↘→ + P	Helicopter
↓↘→ + B	Leg Uppercut
↓↙← + B	Giant Flip Kick
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Atomic Fall
Jump, ↓↙← + K	Horse Kick (when behind opponent)
Jump, ↓↘→ + K	Missile Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Charging Flip Kick
Running + K	Baseball Slide
Running + P	Charging Elbow

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Double Uppercut

Beast Super:

↓↘→, ←, → + B

Bakuryu

P	Chop
→ + P	Spinning Chop
← + P	Shoulder Ram
↑ + P	Spinning Flip
↘ + P	Uppercut
↙ + P	Knee Clothesline
K	High Kick
→ + K	Axe Kick
← + K	Roundhouse Kick
↘ + K, K	Double Knee Tripper
↙ + K	Trip
↑ + K	Spinning Back Kick
→, → + P	Double Palm Strike
→, → + K + K + K	Triple Kick
→, → + B	Drilling Claw
↑ + B	Flying Claw
← + B	Slash Uppercut

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Teleport
↓↘→ + P	Air Driver
↓↘→ + B	Claw Gutter
↓↙← + B	Claw Upper Club
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Spinning Claw
Jump, ↓↙← + K	Backward Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + K	Missile Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Diving Claws
Running + K	Flying Kick
Running + P	Charging Slash

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Super Palm

Beast Supers:

←↙↓↘→ (x2) + B

Busuzima

P	Slap
→ + P	Middle Punch
← + P	Spinning Backhand Punch
↑ + P	Turn Around
↘ + P	Stomach Jab
↙ + P	Middle Backhand Punch
K	Knee
→ + K	High Kick
← + K	Atomic Kick
↘ + K	Sweep
↙ + K	One Foot Sweep
↑ + K	Atomic Missile Drop Kick
→, → + P	Atomic Hammer Drive
→, → + K	Foot Stamp
→, → + B	Back Flip
↓ + B	Atomic Hammer Overdrive
↑ + B	Backflip Slash
← + B	Claw Sting

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Foot Juggler (Hit the K rapidly)
↓↘→ + P	Back Neck-Breaker
↓↘→ + B	Invisibility Claw
↓↙← + B	Invisibility Back Flip
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Horse Kick (when behind opponent)
Jump, ↓↙← + K	Atomic Missile Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + K	Missile Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Slash Back Flip
Running + K	Spinning Missile Drop Kick
Running + P	Charging Head Butt

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Slashing Uppercut

Beast Super:

↓↘→ (x2) + B

Jenny

P	Slap
→ + P	Mid-Slap
← + P	Huh? (taunt)
↑ + P	Double Flip Behind
↘ + P	Slashing Uppercut
↙ + p (x3)	Triple Slap
K	Kick
→ + K (x3)	Rapid Kick
← + K	Slash Kick
↘ + K	Knee Kick
↙ + K	Roundhouse Sweep
↑ + K	Flipping Skip Kick
→, → + P	Charging Elbow
→, → + K	Jumping Slash Kick
→, → + B	Jumping Roundhouse
↑ + B	Overhead Slash Kick
↓ + K + K	Double Sweep
← + B	Helicopter

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Spinning Flying Kick
↓↘→ + P (press K)	One Foot Stand (press Kick repeatedly)
↓↘→ + B	Charging Slash
↓↙← + B	Flying Attack
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Flying Attack
Jump, ↓↙← + K	Backward Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + K	Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Charging Slash Kick
Running + K	Slide Attack
Running + P	Charging Bash

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Electro Claw

Beast Super:

←↙↓↘→ (x2) + B

Long

P	High Punch
→ + P	Strong Punch
← + P	Shoulder Hitter
↑ + P	Flying Elbow
↘ + P	Uppercut
↙ + P	Low Blow
K	High Kick
→ + K	Double Overhead Kick
← + K	Roundhouse Kick
↘ + K	Mid Kick
↙ + K	Sweep Kick
↑ + K	WOOO
→, → + P	Spinning Shoulder Bash
→, → + K	Step Sweep
→, → + B	Upper Slash
↓ + B	Ripping Claws
↑ + B	Helicopter Kick
↓ + K	Low Kick
← + B	Double Palm

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Jumping Head Stomp
↓↘→ + P	Rocket Punch
↓↘→ + K	Double Jumping Kick
↓↘→ + B	Flipping Neck Grab
↓↙← + B	Earthquake Stomp (press B for kicks)
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Spinning Claw
Jump, ↓↙← + K	Backward Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + K	Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Cannonball
Running + K	Charging Flying Kick
Running + P	Charging Elbow

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Mid Elbow

Beast Super:

↓↘→↘↓↙← + B

Marvel

P	Jab
→ + P	Forward Strike
← + P	Spinning Backfist
↑ + P	Overhead Punch
↘ + P	Middle Punch
↙ + P	Spinning Low Fist
K	High Kick
→ + K	Middle Knee
← + K	High Roundhouse Kick
↘ + K	Mid Spin Kick
↙ + K	Knee Kick
↑ + K	Falling Kick
→, → + P	Shoulder Attack
→, → + K	Flying Missile
→, → + B	Charging Head Butt
↓ + B	Knee Claw
↑ + B	Flipping Claw

Special Moves:

↓↙← + P	Super Punch
↓↘→ + P	Claw Uppercut
↓↘→ + B	Face Rip
↓↙← + B	Slashing Uppercut
Jump, ↓↘→ + B	Spinning Claw
Jump, ← + K	Backward Drop Kick
Jump, → + K	Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Diving Claw
Running + K	Sliding Kick
Running + P	Running Tackle

Counter:

↓↙← + K	Rapid Kicks

Beast Super:
↓↙← (x2) + B

Stun

P	Strong Punch
→ + P	Shoulder Throw
← + P	Middle Punch
↑ + P	Hammer Overdrive
↘ + P	Uppercut
↙ + P	Earthquake
K	Knee
→ + K	Low Kick
← + K	Jawbreaker
↘ + K	Forward Feint
↙ + K	Backward Roll
↑ + K	Flipping Axe Kick
→, → + P	Overhead Punch
→, → + K	Flying Stab Kick
→, → + B	Head Butt
↓ + B	Diving Clawing Knee
↑ + B	Jumping Head Butt
← + B	Ramming Sting

Special Moves:

↓↙← + P	Foot Slam
↓↘→ + P	Neck Throw
↓↘→ + B	Wall Ram
↓↙← + B	Electric Counter
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Flying Head Butt
Jump, ↓↘→ + P	Falling Comet
Running + B	Flying Drat
Running + K	Baseball Slide
Running + P	Charging Horn

Counter

↓↙← + K	Stabbing Kick

Beast Supers:
→↘↓↙← (x2) + B

Uriko

P	Jab
→ + P	Elbow
← + P	Double Fist Strike
↑ + P	Double Uppercut
↘ + P	Mid Elbow
↙ + P	Hard Punch
K	High Kick
→ + K	Jump Kick
← + K	Strong Kick
↘ + K	Spinning Kick & Punch
↙ + K	Sweep
↑ + K	Jump Kick
→, → + P	Forward Roll
→, → + P + P	Rolling Low Punch
→, → + P + K	Rolling Jumping Kick
→, → + K	Double Jump Kick
→, → + B	Slashing Uppercut
→ + B	Hard Slashes
↑ + B	Jumping Uppercut
← + B	Double Jumping Kick

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Head Stomp
↓↘→ + P	Multiple Slash
↓↘→ + B	*Meow?*
↓↙← + B	Slashing Claw
Running + B	Spinning Slide
Running + K	Flying Double Kick
Running + P	Falling Head Butt

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Jumping Palm

Beast Super:
↓↙←↙↓↘→ + B

Yugo

Normal Moves

P	High Punch
→ + P	Strong Punch
← + P	Middle Punch
↑ + P	Flying Jawbreaker
↘ + P	Uppercut
↙ + P + P	Duck, Overhand Punch
K	High Kick
→ + K	Hammer Kick
← + K	Roundhouse
↘ + K	Chest Kick (press K again for two)
↙ + K	Sweep
↑ + K	Jumping Roundhouse
→, → + P	Flying Uppercut
→, → + K	Flying Middle Knee
→, → + B	Overhead Slash
↑ + B	Quarter Moon
↓ + K	Double Sweep
↓ + B	The Gutter
← + B	Spinning Backhand Slap

Special Moves

↓↙← + P	Electro Uppercut
↓↙← + K	Full Moon
↓↘→ + P	Rapid Punch
↓↘→ + K	Flying Knee
↓↘→ + B	Shredding Neck
↓↙← + B + B	Bow & Arrow
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Half Moon
Jump, ↓↙← + K	Backward Drop Kick
Jump, ↓↘→ + K	Drop Kick
Running + B	Spinning Missile Drop Kick
Running + K	Ground Missile
Running + P	Charging Elbow

Beast Super:
↓↙←↙↓↘→ + B

Secret Characters

There are two secret characters in the game, both from the original *Bloody Roar*. Gado is much like Marvel when it comes to moves, but he's a LOT more powerful. To get him, simply finish the game with any character.

Then, there's Shen Long (no, not the infamous SHENG LONG) who plays nearly exactly like Long from the first *Bloody Roar*. To get him, you have to beat the game without losing a round.

Gado

P	Jab
→ + P	Strong Elbow
← + P	Spinning Elbow
↑ + P	Overhead Punch
↘ + P	Punching Head Butt
↙ + P	Knee Punch
K	High Kick
→ + K	Strong Knee
← + K	Roundhouse
↘ + K	Hip Kick
↙ + K	One Foot Sweep
↑ + K	
→, → + P	Charging Shoulder
→, → + K	Flying Knee
→, → + B	Charging Head Butt
↓ + B	Knee Claw
↑ + B	Back Flip Slash
→ + B	Stinging Claw
← + B	Atomic Kick

Special Moves

↓↙← + P	Super Punch
↓↘→ + P	Mauling Punch
↓↘→ + B	Face Rip
↓↙← + B	Slashing Uppercut
Jump, ↓↙← + B	Spinning Claw
Jump, ← + K	Backward Drop Kick
Jump, → + K	Drop Kick
Running + B	Diving Claw
Running + K	Sliding Kick
Running + P	Body Tackle

Counter:

↓↙← + K	Roundhouse Kick

Beast Supers:
↓↘→↘↓↙← + B

Shen Long

P	High Punch
→ + P	Strong Punch
← + P	Shoulder Hitter
↑ + P	Flying Elbow
↘ + P	Uppercut
↙ + P	Low Blow
K	High Kick
→ + K	Double Forward Jumping Kick
← + K	Roundhouse kick
↘ + K	Strong Kick
↙ + K	Sweep Kick
↑ + K	WOOO
→, → + P	Spinning Elbow
→, → + K	Step Sweep
→, → + B	Upper Slash
↓ + B	Ripping Claws
↑ + B	Helicopter Kick
↓ + K	Low Kick
← + B	Double Palm Strike

Special Moves:

↓↙← + K	Head Stomper
↓↘→ + P	Rocket Punch
↓↘→ + K	Double Jumping Kick
↓↘→ + B	Charging Neck Grab
↓↙← + B	Earthquake Stomp (press B again to kick)
Running + B	Cannonball
Running + K	Charging Flying Kick
Running + P	Charging Elbow

Counter:

↓↙← + P	Counter Elbow

Beast Super:
↓↘→↘↓↙← + B

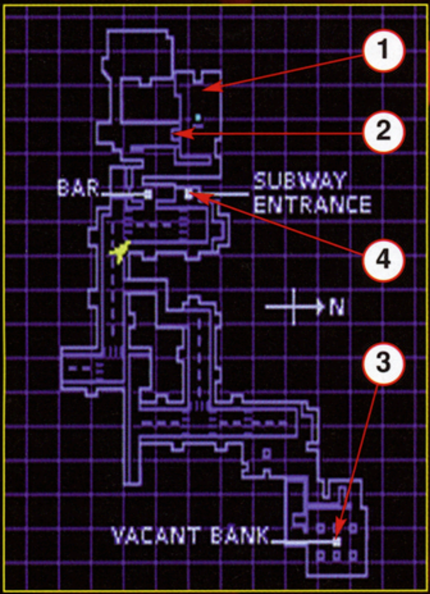


Syphon Filter - Guide Part 1

One of the hottest types of games, tactical espionage started off with *Tenchu* and was a near-perfect adventure in *Metal Gear Solid*. However, there is still room for improvement and *Syphon Filter* delivers a lot of great action with enough tactical mumbo-jumbo for a good Clancy novel. Mixing great control, cool weapons, lots of gun-toting action as well as *Tomb Raider*-esque adventure sequences, *Syphon Filter* is a solid gaming package that all *MGS* heads will enjoy. And this game ain't easy, folks — not at all, which prompts this dango to deliver part 1 of the Syphon Filter Guide.

Playing Tips:

- The taser is one of your best weapons. It doesn't use ammo, it can kill all guys except those equipped with Flak Jackets and it has incredible range. Try tasering guys off roofs!
- The flashlight is a very necessary tool in the game. To use the flashlight, hold down select and scroll through your weapons using the L2 and R2 buttons.
- Always move while shooting. This ensures that you'll rarely get hit by anything.
- The lock-on button (R1) is extremely useful, as it allows you to fire backwards.
- Don't shoot your CBDC support guys, or it's game over.
- Downed enemies will always leave ammo.
- Once you catch on fire, you're dead... so don't play with fire.

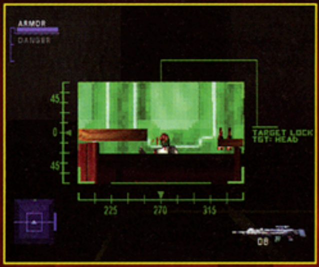


Starting Point - Mission Objectives:

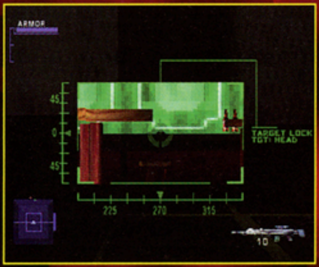
1 Eliminate Kravitch and Destroy Communications Array
2 Turn Off Power To Terminal Security Doors
3 Protect CBDC Bomb Squad
4 Tag bomb in Subway Terminal
? Eliminate Rhoemer



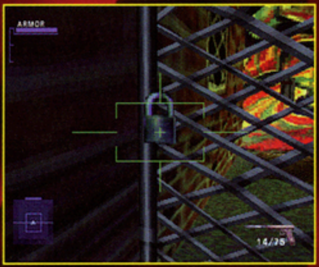
You start off in the middle of the street. CBDC agents (the yellow guys) are firing at terrorists down the street. Use your taser to take out these terrorists to get extra 9mm ammo. Head into the bar and use the taser on the hiding



terrorists behind the crates. Continue down the path till you get a communication from Lian. Once you do, get your sniper rifle ready and take out Kravitch from across the room. You can simply run up to him and take him out, but since



he's wearing a Flak Jacket, getting the head shot with the sniper is easier. Once you get him, go behind the bar where you'll find a box that holds a shotgun. You'll be rushed by three terrorists that go down fast, thanks to your shiny



shotgun. Head out of the bar area, and into the crate room (where you fried one of the terrorists). Use your handgun to shoot the window and climb through. You'll hear a firefight by a nearby street, but ignore it. Go to the fenced



area and use your aiming button (L1) to shoot the lock on the fenced door. Now, hit the elevator switch and wait for the platform to come up. Go down the elevator and select your flashlight. Look for the terminal power switch and turn it off. Now go back up to the street level.

Watch out for the terrorist on the roof as you get back up to the street level. Head back into the window from where you came from, and take out the terrorist inside the building. Now head back to the starting point. You want to head to the Vacant Bank, where you'll need to







protect your CBDC guys as they disarm a bomb. You can ignore the shooters on the roof, but if you're running low on ammo, take them out with the taser. Head into the bank and protect your CBDC guys by gunning down approaching terrorists. Grab the M-16 from the box as well as the Grenades hidden in the dark room of the bank. If you got hit, also grab the Flak Jacket as you leave the bank.

As you leave the bank, there are a lot of terrorists on the roofs, so be careful. You can opt to take them out with the taser to get more ammo.

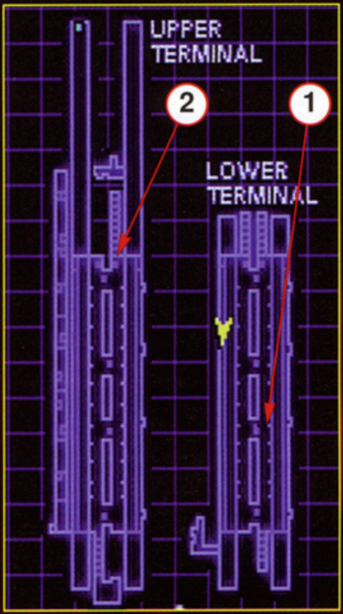


Head back to the subway area, where the door should be open. Go down into the subway terminal and clear out all enemies. There's an M-16 box and Flak Jacket Box if you need it. Now, find the bomb and tag it for CBDC. Head to the end of this subway terminal, and look for an open room to the right (there should be a sign that says "NO EXIT" above it). Enter and use your flashlight to look for the elevator switch in the dark room. Take the elevator down. At this lower subway terminal, take out all the guys in this area. The last guy guarding the bomb is wearing a Flak Jacket so it might be easier to snipe him from afar. Approach the bomb to go on to the next level.





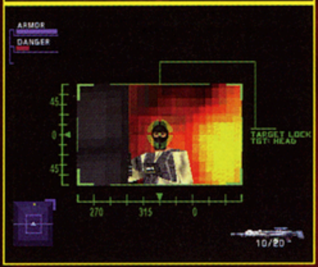




Destroyed Subway - Mission Objectives:
1 Locate explosives cache
2 Blow open passage to street
and protect CBDC agent
? Eliminate Rhoemer







You'll find yourself in the flaming ruins of the lower subway terminal. Head down the clear path and when a flaming terrorist runs at you, just back off as he'll slowly burn to death. Head





down this path where you'll find two terrorists. Kill them both, and get onto the subway that one of the terrorists was running on. Drop down and you'll have a firefight with a few terrorists. One of them has a Flak Jacket and throws



grenades, so be careful when sniping. After taking him out, search the subway rail for a box of plastic explosives using the flashlight. Take it and make your way into the center of this terminal. There should be a red vending machine that you can get up on. Once you're on top of it, jump



up to the black concrete slab above you. Turn left and walk across the sign till you see a white slab of concrete to your left and above. Jump up to that white slab, and walk across till you see a long white slab of concrete. Jump up to this one, and turn left to see a black railing above you. Grab this railing and shimmy right, till you can drop safely onto the upper subway terminal.



Now, head to the other end of this terminal till you fight a blocked passage. Use the plastic explosive on the door, and run like the wind!



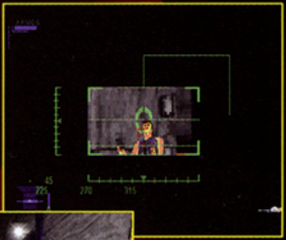
When the CBDC agent runs in, follow him to the bomb, and cover his butt as other terrorists approach. Now, go to the left of the blocked passage where you should get a message from Lian. Now, find the gas main on the west side of this terminal, and turn it off.



Head back to the north end of this terminal where the left passage should be open. Head down this subway tube and climb up on the subway trains to continue. Take out terrorists as they come. Be careful of the flaming terrorist as he comes really close to you. As you come to the end of the subway, you'll face Mara Aramov.



BOSS: Mara Aramov
You won't be able to engage Aramov till the very end of this subway tube. If you need to, grab the Flak Jacket if you get hurt during this stage. You'll be running down a subway tube with subways going back and forth. Watch the lights in the tunnel to see which way the subway is coming and going. If you need to, roll underneath the center divider to avoid subways or hide in the crevices found in the walls. Concentrate your firepower on the guards rather than Aramov. Eventually, she'll hide in a crevice on the right side of the tunnel. While you can walk straight up to her and gun her point-blank with a shotgun, she's wearing a Flak Jacket, so try sniping her instead.







The Last Blade 2



What's this, you say? *Last Blade 2* AGAIN!?! Yeah, sure we covered it last time, but we, the honorable staff at *GameFan*, wish to make it very clear to arcade goers and Neo Geo freaks all over the place: *Last Blade 2* is easily one of Neo Geo's best fighting games, even on par with the legendary *Samurai Shodown II*. And if any of you guys know me, I AM the biggest *Samurai Shodown* freak around these parts, so for me to make such a high claim must be true. Don't believe me, eh? Well, allow me the rambling space then.



"...easily one of Neo Geo's best fighting games..."

















Set in Japan circa 1864, *Last Blade 2* takes place a year after the first one, where many of the first's warriors are brought back together due to a resurrected evil. Because of the time frame, you'll be seeing a lot of "gaijin" influences in the background. The whole atmosphere of the game seems slightly odd, but, at the same time, fits the myriad collection of characters found in the game.

With sixteen characters to choose from, you'll be hard pressed to find only one that you like. And if picking your character is difficult, you'll also have to pick what mode you'll be fighting in. As like the original, after you choose a character, you'll be able to choose either Speed or Power mode. And as the title infers, Speed Mode allows for faster attacks, and therefore greater combo strings at the expense of damage. And Power Mode is exactly opposite; while you're limited in the amount of attacks you can dish out, every hit takes off a lot. Also, Power Mode allows you to Super Cancel (canceling special moves into Supers), while Speed Mode offers a "custom combo" system that, while it will drain your meter, enables you to chain at least a 10+ hit combo. But the game isn't all about offense as demonstrated by the Repel button. The Repel button allows the player to counter normal attacks, thereby leaving the enemy open for some pain. The Repel button is the bane for those super defensive "crouching fierce" players since you can repel attacks even while jumping! So, all the great features from the first *Last Blade* will be found here. So, what's new then?

Glad you asked... four new characters have been added to the normal line-up. They include Shinnosuke Kagami, the boss from the original; Kojiro Sanada, who fights in a similar style to Keichiro Washizuka; a fourteen-year old swordswoman named Hibiki Takane; and Setsuna, all around bad-ass. Other than those characters, the game would seem relatively similar to the original, yes? Well, the overall playability of







The Last Blade 2

The Last Blade 2























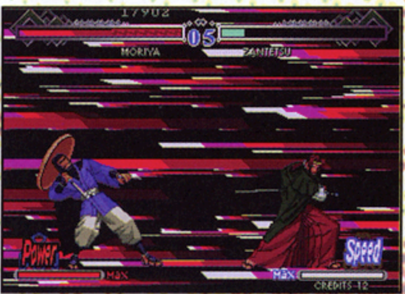




Last Blade 2 seems much more fun than the original, and the balance between characters seems tweaked so one character doesn't dominate the game.

Visually, this game is a 2D fighter's dream. While the animation ain't on par with the likes of *SF3*, the game is simply gorgeous. Large characters, cool backgrounds, and special effects that bring up the memories of past Neo Geo glory days, the best way to describe the look of *Last Blade 2* is a hybrid mix between *King of Fighters* and *Samurai Shodown*. Each character has a distinct look, ranging from the playboy-like Hyo Amano and the kung-fu fighting Recca Lee to the disgustingly cute Akari Ichijo and the general "I'm one bad mutha" Setsuna. Special effects of the attacks range from the mildly lukewarm multi-hit super of Moriya, to the hilarious "Deadman's Party" super of Akari. Basically, if you're not impressed with the graphics in this game at all, you can take your 3D-polygon-loving arse back to the likes of *Toshinden*.

Perhaps the biggest difference I noticed between *Last Blade* and its sequel are the sound effects. I don't remember the sound effects in *Last Blade* being great because *Last Blade 2*'s sounds are simply astonishing. The utmost detail was given to such sounds as a metal sword hitting a wooden surface. And the voices in the game are definitely the best I've ever heard in any fighter. In the end, *Last Blade 2* demonstrates that if there's one thing to rely on in the video game industry, it's that SNK still can make amazing fighters. Neo Geo owners better not miss this title when it comes home and for those arcade players that have yet to see this game... you better find it so I can beat you till you cry for mommy. **Dangohead**











Samurai Shodown returns! After a couple of relatively lackluster installments, *Last Blade 2* picks up the *SamSho* mantle and runs with it! This game plays almost entirely like *SamSho2*, replete with the *Art of Fighting*-originated scaling characters and vicious sword-swinging for which the *SamSho* series was once famous (and has since fallen face-down with the Hyper editions... <bleargh>. Give this one a swing or two, and hope for a timely DC port.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	9	7	7	90



What can I say? Mix the magic of the *KoF* and the *Samurai* games together and you've got *Last Blade 2*!! Although I must admit I never played the first, I loved the second. The character designs are just the coolest, the music rocks (in a very *Soul Edge* kind of way), the moves are awesome. Sure, it's a bit unbalanced, but so was *KoF* and I love those games to death. It's all about EX-level Recca Lee and Monk Power baby! This is still the ancient Neo? Awesome!

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	9	5	95



Old Reliable; it may be outdated hardware, but the Neo Geo still hums. I must confess I've always held that Neo Geo fighters are better than Capcom's, and *Last Blade 2* accentuates my point with the type of kinetic, fine-tuned gameplay that originally made me a fan. A cross between *King of Fighters* and *Samurai Shodown*, *LB2* is a blistering fighter with enough pyrotechnics and over-the-top attacks that make Neo Geo fighters such a joy to play. Viva *Last Blade 2*!

G	C	P	M	O	
7	10	10	7	7	92

The Last Blade 2



PLAYSTATION 2 SPECS!!

As the world gears up for the upcoming PS2 announcement, at the recent Solid State Circuits Conference held in February Sony finally, officially, dropped the bomb. Ken Kutaragi, father of the PS, also attended the event where Sony announced an alliance with Toshiba to produce the next super-system.

Although the team did announce a new system chip that could push 55 million polygons a second, many people mistook this information for PS2 info. In reality, as people from Toshiba have explained, the actual PS will push "in excess of 6 million" polygons per second... still quite an achievement! Plus, DVD has been confirmed, but still no confirmation on the noted backwards-compatibility feature mentioned below. But we do know that the PS2 will have a 250 Mhz (compared to the DC's 200), 128+-bit processor. The machine of power will also utilize something called NuRBS (Non-uniform Rational B-Splines). In English, NuRBS is a more flexible, practical use of 3D geometry. Circles will appear rounder and 3D images cleaner than anything traditional polygons have accomplished thus far. Sony sources state that their intention for the new machine is to submerge players so much in the virtual environment, they won't know they're playing a game.

PS2 BACKWARD COMPATIBLE?

In other PS2 news, the system is rumored to contain a second processor that will allow older PS software to be played on the new system. Not only will older software run on the new system, but the added power of the PS2 will boost the resolution and texture quality of the older titles (much like PS emulators already improve PS visuals). The second processor is said to have its own RAM compartment, with upwards of 70+ megs to play with. If this is true, then Sony may very well redefine the term "customer satisfaction."

NINTENDO 2000...

Dubbed the Nintendo 2000 by gossiping busybodies everywhere, Nintendo's newest super-console is causing quite a stir in the gaming industry. Magic Man Shigeru Miyamoto caused quite a stir when he announced a few months back that the next *Mario* title will appear on the new machine, igniting a flurry of curiosity everywhere. Details are tight, but we do know for a FACT (and you can quote us on this one) that much of the same development team from the floundering Silicon Graphics team (the ones responsible for the N64 itself) are developing the new hardware alongside Nintendo. But just for the more curious Nintendo fanatics out there, the word on the street is that Nintendo is very curious about the DVD format and is considering it as the storage device! No more carts for the Big N? We'll keep you posted as details pour in.

ONLINE GAMING FOR NINTENDO 2000?

In other new-Nintendo system news, we learned recently that Nintendo has signed an agreement with with Nexus Telocation Systems to produce a modem for a 'new, undisclosed' Nintendo machine. All fingers are pointing to the Nintendo 2000 as the recipient. With Sega's DC having a modem bundled in from the start and Sony's upcoming PS2 rumored to be joining the online brigade, it seems likely that the new Nintendo machine would also have a similar feature. However, it's been common knowledge for some time that Nintendo has always preferred a satellite-system design over the more traditional phone line service (Miyamoto himself has said on several occasions that he feels that satellite is the future). More details as they come in.

DVD FOR DREAMCAST?

Proving that once again, the new Dreamcast is more PC than any traditional console, rumors are surfacing about an upcoming DVD-expandable version of the DC to emerge sometime this year. Sega has touted the DC as "The System of the Future" and, keeping with the PC model, took the initiative and made sure the thing was upgradeable. With DVD quickly becoming the standard in both PC software and home movies (as well as the Nuon and PS2 support), it seems likely that Sega will also jump on the bandwagon. The DC uses a proprietary GD (Giga-Drive) in place of a DVD drive, something that's caused a stir among critics stating that Sega once again missed the boat. Fixing the problem before the system is set to hit our shores would be desirable to some, but there's no doubt that Sega still remembers their past failures with system add-ons, namely the Sega CD and 32X attachments (both of which helped split and destroy their 16-bit dominance).

DOOM TOYS TO COINCIDE WITH MCFARLANE MOVIE?

After the shocking announcement on the Howard Stern show that comic-guru/egotist Todd McFarlane had snatched up the rights to the long-awaited *Doom* movie, action figure fans everywhere are wondering if the bad boy will create figures based on the film. With McFarlane's figure company, McFarlane Toys (aptly named) known around the world for their highly detailed stylings and (this is putting it lightly) gruesome attention to detail, it only makes sense that a new line based on the ultra-popular *Doom* characters would make an appearance. Some bigger toy marts, namely Wal-Mart and Toys R Us, have refused to sell the more gruesome McFarlane figures (namely the seminal Serial Killer line), but have agreed to carry less bloodied versions. Apparently it's okay to show a psychopath with a chainsaw and a bucket of severed heads, just as long as there isn't any blood. Gotta love it.

PARASITE EVE... THE MOVIE?

Grab your Chocobos and hold tight, Square heads (that means you, Eggo!) because if you loved *Parasite Eve*, your dreams might come true. Madonna has recently snatched the rights for the film version of *Parasite Eve*. *PE* was a tremendous success last year for Square, but not many people knew that the game was actually based on a best-selling science fiction book (in Japan) before it was taken to the next level. Little is known right now if the movie will have connections with the game, but knowing of Square's Hollywood-bound *Final Fantasy* epic, it wouldn't surprise anyone. The only question that remains is: Who'll play Aya? Not Madonna, not Madonna!!

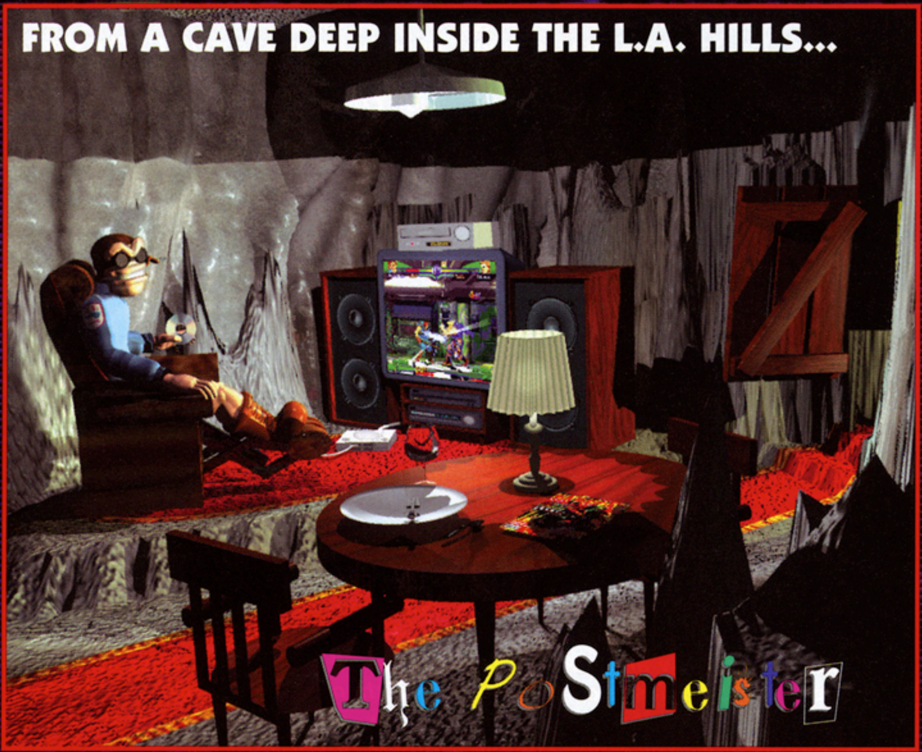
FINAL FANTASY MOVIE DETAILS!

In keeping with the game-turned-movie motif, Square has announced details about their upcoming all-CG motion picture, *Final Fantasy: Movie* (the title is sure to change). Although small snippets of footage have been circulating on the web (it's truly amazing!), Square has announced that the release date for the film will be Summer 2001. Featuring an unprecedented amount of realism, Hironobu Sakaguchi has stated that Square intends to "fuse fantasy with entertainment" and created a new type of entertainment. The film is already stated for an American release around the same time as the Japanese and is being created at Square's Honolulu office.

NO DREAMCAST IN 99?

Not to alarm anyone who's been patiently putting off that import DC in hopes of snagging one come this fall, but massive rumors have been circulating around industry experts that Sega will NOT debut their new DC console this year! Reports are that internal problems at Sega of America have prompted the dismissal of several important employees, including SOA's Director of Public Relations, Dan Stevens. All of this comes at a time when SOA President Bernie Stolar is set to make an announcement (sometime in March) as to just what Sega's future plans are here in the states.

How all of this will affect the DC's chances here this fall are unknown, but let's just hope that Sega sorts themselves out before the expected September 9th launch date... we all wanna buy a DC!!



With my new satellite TV system, I can now watch the Dennis Miller Show *three times a day! Who said this wasn't the Land of Opportunity?*

Beguiled by Guile?

Hellooooooooooo, GameFan!!!!! :D

Well, hmm... first off, I just gotta throw out a big ol' "WELCOME BACK!!!!" to my fave mag! :) I sorely missed you guys during the previous few months, and so it's simply PEACHY to have you back again! When I found out about the new issue hittin' the store shelves, I spent 2 weeks chasing around in mall after mall looking for it! My Dad even ran through the rainy streets of Harvard Square with me one evening trying to find newsstands! We were a sopping mess, but that doesn't matter :) I now have Volume 7, Issue 1 in my possession! Bwahahahaha!!!!!! :D Take THAT, rainy night in Harvard Square!!!! You may soak, but I shall prevail!!!! Erm, not that that made any sense. Um, nevermind :) On to the questions 'n comments! (in list form, cuz... I dunno, just seems customary) ;D

1. *jumps around like a mad ape, doing the fabled maniacal "happy dance"* I am the HAPPIEST kid alive right now!!!! Yes, and I mean, ecstatic!!!!! Why, you ask?! Well, namely because GUILE'S BACK IN *SFA3* GUILE'S BACK IN *SFA3* GUILE'S BACK IN *SFA3* GUILE'S BACK IN *SFA3*!!!!!!!!! Yes, I'll say it again, GUILE'S BACK IN *SFA3*!!!!!! Oh... Oh man... I simply cannot express the sheer joy that that news brought to my very-much-in-Guile-withdrawal psyche!!!! And I found out X-mas day, too!!!!! The greatest gift ever!!!! :D I... I cried when I saw the screenshots... I CRIED... *sniff*... Thank you, Capcom... THANK YOU... for finally answering my prayers... :) GUILE'S BACK IN *SFA3*!!!!!!!!! *runs around in manic circles waving her stuffed Guile around* YESSSSSSSS!!!!!!!!

So, um... any chance of GameFan publishing any nice pics 'n stuff? Huh? Wink wink, nudge nudge? Hee hee... ;D *grin* Oh, and will my beloved G make it into the U.S. version of the game?... Oh pleeeeez...*falls to floor, imploring on bended knee*... Huh? What's that you say about "being obsessed"?... Who, me?... Whatever gave you that idea?... *drool*

2. 'N how 'bout the Dreamcast? I've heard rumors of *SFA3*, *Marvel vs. Capcom*, and *Jurassic Park: The Lost World* SEGA shooter could possibly be makin' it to the console! Any truth to that stuff, or am I just [delusional]?... I hope I'm not [delusional]... that gets rather emotionally scarring after awhile... Kinda like being deprived of Guile for about 4+ years... *sobs* Oh, the agony...

3. And okay... time for some honest BN-in'... I know you guys probably get this enough, but I'm gonna hafta say it again just to prove that the truth ain't always a bad thing! :) In all sincerity, you guys have gotta be my fave mag out there. Always have been, always will be. There's really no other mag that I read cover-2-cover. You guys are probably one of (if not THE) last saviors to NOT give up on our beloved realm of 2D gaming! Whilst other mags are letting the wonderful world of hand-drawn 2D drown faster than you can say "Sonic Boom!", you guys are still pushin' the issue, and keeping it afloat for those of us 2D-die-hards who are still hanging onto the lifeboats. I know us 2D gamers are a dying breed, but I'm not giving up. As long as Capcom lives, I'm hoping we will, too. And GameFan just helps. I mean, you guys are STILL willing to support the Saturn!!!! Oh the Saturn... whatta nice li'l black box. *pats her Saturn* After everyone else has jumped ship, GameFan takes the rudder once again. Plus, any mag that realizes the might and pure magic that is *SkullMonkeys* gets a BIG thumbs-up in my book ;) Thanks, guys. I'm sure it's a tough job being one of the last set of saviors, but please keep it up :)

Well, by now I'm sure you've gotten enough eye-strain reading all this, and the syrup is probably giving you all cavities, so I'll leave you alone. But welcome back — it's great to have my fave mag back again :) And did I mention that I'm super-ecstatically-happy-happy-joy-joyfully-insanely overjoyed that Guile's back?!!!!!! Well, I AM!!!! :D *does happy dance* Thank you,



CAPCOM!!!! *bows down repeatedly* Ooh... that hurt my head. Okay, okay, I'll stop buggin' you guys now :) Again, keep up the good work that you do, and remember... Joe Head Joe is really only a figment of your imagination... Just keep telling yourself that. :)

The crazed Guile-O-Phile,
Jen Seng
Boston, MA

Dear Jen,

Anyone living in Boston should know that the best magazine stand in Harvard Square is the little kiosk next to the T entrance (that is, if you can get to it throught the throng of punks and skaters that always seem to loiter right there. This kiosk also has a roof, so rain won't fall on your head.

What's all this "probably" stuff? Is there any other mag that you write to as much as ours? I hope for their sakes, that the answer to that is no. We are your favorite magazine, and don't you ever forget it.

You'll be happy to see that in this very issue, SFA3 *shots abound! Also, brace yourself,* SFA3 *and* Marvel vs. Capcom *will be coming out on the Dreamcast. No word yet, though, on* JP:LW.

Good to hear from you again, Jen. Keep the letters and pictures coming.

Resident Evil 2 Exposed!

Dear Posty,

I have recently played *Res 2* for about the millionth time (yes, I enjoyed it that much), and have found almost all of the movies Capcom has taken from:

Jaws: the bottle of pure oxygen in the alligator chase.
Alligator: self-explanatory.
T2: Judgment Day: the molten steel Tyrant fell into.
Night of the Living Dead: the theme of the game.
Dawn of the Dead: See previous explanation.
Day of the Dead: Getting the point?
All other George Romero films.
Aliens: chest-bursting scene involving reporter and chief of police.
Return of the Living Dead (pt 1 & 2 because the third one sucked beyond belief. A waste of money, both mine and the studio's): the creature's intelligence.
Tarantula: Go figure.

Well, that's only a few of the movies that I caught. If you look, you'll see what I'm talking about. I just thought I'd let you know about these striking similarities. I watch more movies than you think [actually, I've never thought about you, at all, until this letter], so I know what I'm talking about. Thanks for your time and remember to shop smart; shop S-Mart (sorry, Bruce Campbell just rules).

Loyal Reader,
Aaron Brashear
Portland, OR

Dear Aaron,

True, it does seem that you watch a lot of movies, but I'm not sure if that means you know what you're talking about. If you knew what you were talking about, you'd have picked up that the chest bursting scene is originally from Alien, *not* Aliens. *You'd also have known that no other Romero films deal with the undead. Vampires, martial law and crazy monkeys, yes, but zombies, no. Beside, Romero is far from the first director to make zombie films.* The White Zombie *was made in 1932.*

I don't want to knock you too much (although I get great pleasure from it) because I happened to agree with you. Resident Evil 2 *does borrow many scenes, themes and ideas from film, but they certainly aren't the only ones. Have you played* Parasite Eve*? Am I the only one that noticed that all of the creatures in that game were stolen directly from John Carpenter's* The Thing*? It is even more blatant than* Res 2.

Personally, I think Res 2 *borrows most heavily from* Teen Wolf, Too*: It is a total cash run to capitalize on the success of the first, made shorter and with less originality.*

By the way, how can you possible retain any credibility after admitting to liking Return of the Living Dead 2*? That movie is almost as bad as part three. The original is the only one of those three worth watching.*

Contraband Contra codes

Dear Posty,

I recently purchased a Sega Genesis for $29.99, at EB, for the sole purpose of a return to the 16-bit days. The feeling of nostalgia is quite enjoyable. I purchased the 6-pack, *Castlevania: Bloodlines* and *Contra: Hard Corps*.

As far as *Contra: Hard Corps* is concerned, I'm hoping for one simple request. The 3 lives you get with the 5 continues isn't close to being enough. I seem to remember there being a code for 99 lives, for this game. I have beaten all of the *Contra* games ever made; even the God-awful *Legacy of War*, which subsequently led me to skip *C: The Contra Adventure* [*I guess that means you didn't beat all of them, now doesn't it, Art?*]. Please help me to beat the Genesis version, which I love. If you could give me that code, you would be a godsend. Thanks for listening.

Art Webber
Scotia, NY

Dear Art,

It is good that you only bought the Genesis to play 16-bit games. I'd hate to think you spent your $29.99 on it to play 32-bit games...

I greatly enjoy being made someone's godsend; that feeling of power is more than enough to fuel my ever-increasing ego. So, without further ado, here is the code for which you seek, Contra-boy:

For All Weapons, pause the game and then enter up, up, down down, A, up, up, down, down, B, up, up down, down, C.

For Extra Lives, enter C, B, A, left, right, C, B, A, left, right, C, B, A, left, right, at the title screen.

The Level Select code is A, B, C, right, left, A, B, C, right, left, A, B, C, right, left, at the title screen, on controller 2.

There you go, all the codes you need. Now go get 'em, tiger!



Because we couldn't find space for Greg Wilcox's letter, we thought we'd include his clever drawing of HDTV Monitaur. He also flooded our office with copies of his fanzine and will be happy to know we are all getting a chuckle out of them.

Write to me or I'll run for President!
The PoStmeister
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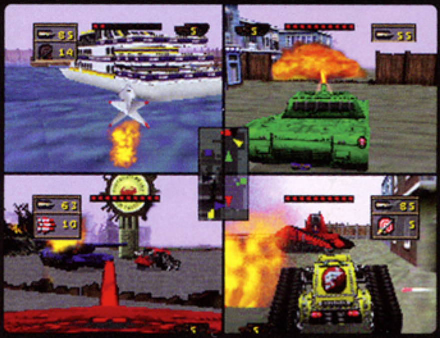




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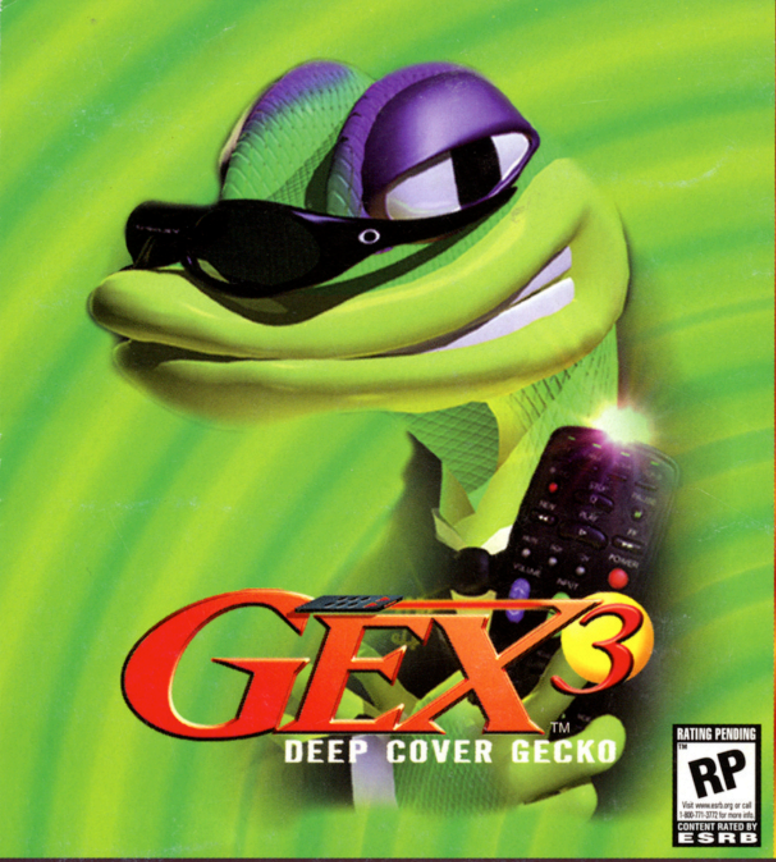
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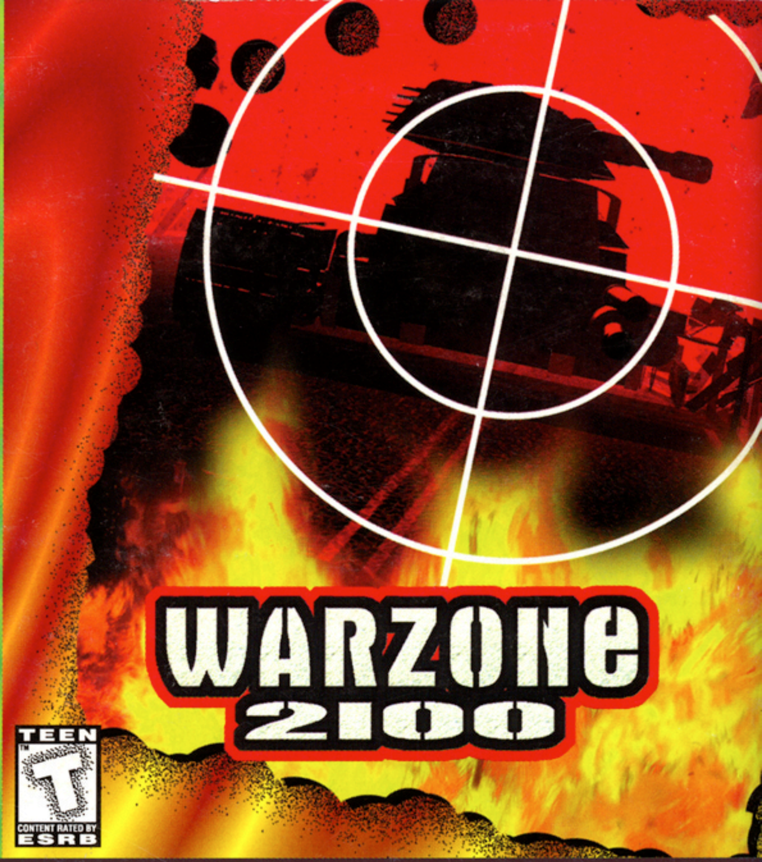
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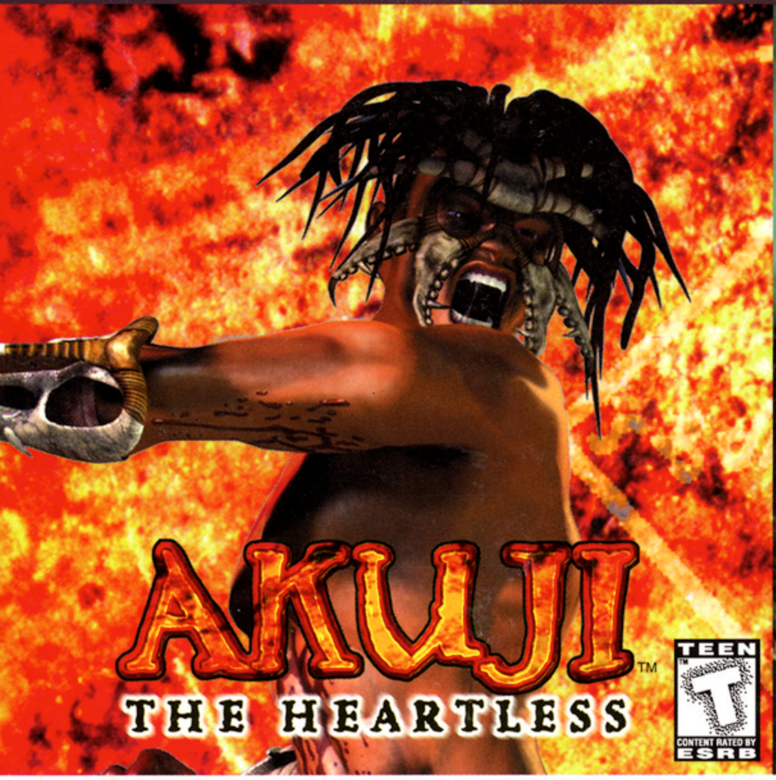
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